

SPECIAL EDITION

GARDENS
ILLUSTRATED

A YEAR OF PLANTS

Discover what the experts grow

248

BEAUTIFUL IDEAS
FOR YOUR
BORDERS

TOP PICKS FOR

Early flowers

Scented blooms

Shady spots

Autumn foliage

Winter colour

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Curated by garden designer Annie Guilfoyle and horticulturalist Noel Kingsbury

Garden Masterclass is a unique education portal for garden and landscape people.

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Our tutors include: Prof. James Hitchmough; Charlie Harpur; Prof. Nigel Dunnett, Dr. Noel Kingsbury; Tom & Sue Stuart-Smith; Caroline Jackson, Midori Shintani; Annie Guilfoyle; Jason Ingram; John Little; Richard Scott; Marco Scano; Julia Crawford; Maurice Foster; Dan Pearson and Troy Scott-Smith.

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WELCOME



We're delighted to bring you *A Year of Plants* (2024), your comprehensive guide to creating a garden that dazzles every day. Packed with 248 meticulously selected plants, from the delicate blooms of early spring to the fiery hues of autumn foliage, this special edition from the team behind *Gardens Illustrated* covers

every stage of the gardening calendar. Inside, you'll find ideas for trees, shrubs, climbers, perennials, annuals, bulbs and foliage plants that will thrive in your garden, whatever its size, style or soil type.

What sets us apart is the expertise in these pages, with tried-and-tested recommendations from head gardeners and plantspeople from renowned gardens including Gravetye, West Dean, Wildside and Hunting Brook. Whether you're seeking early flowers, show-stopping scent, long-lasting summer blooms or winter colour, *A Year of Plants* will be a valuable companion you can return to time and time again, as you plan and plant your garden through the seasons. With its wealth of inspiration and practical advice, it's the key to unlocking a garden that shines 365 days a year.

Stephanie Mahon

STEPHANIE MAHON, EDITOR,
GARDENS ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE



7



51

CONTENTS

7 Spring

29 Early summer

51 Late summer

75 Autumn

97 Winter and early spring



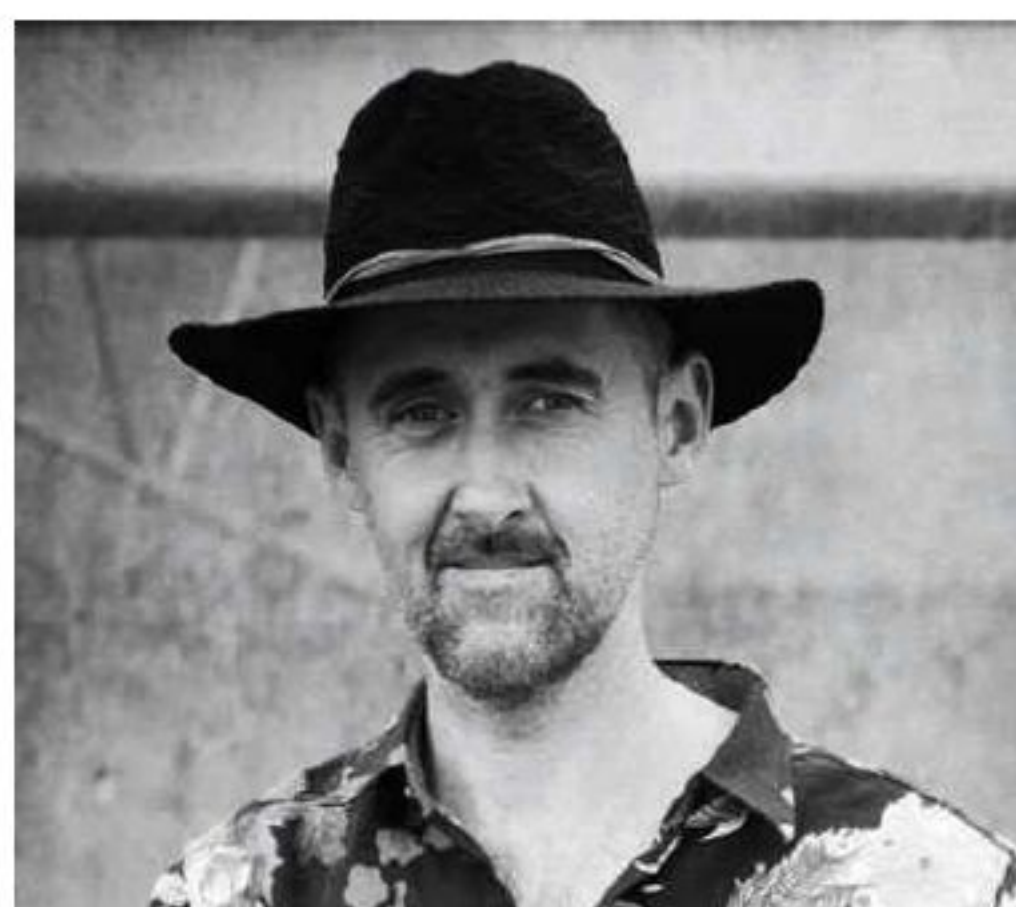
75



97

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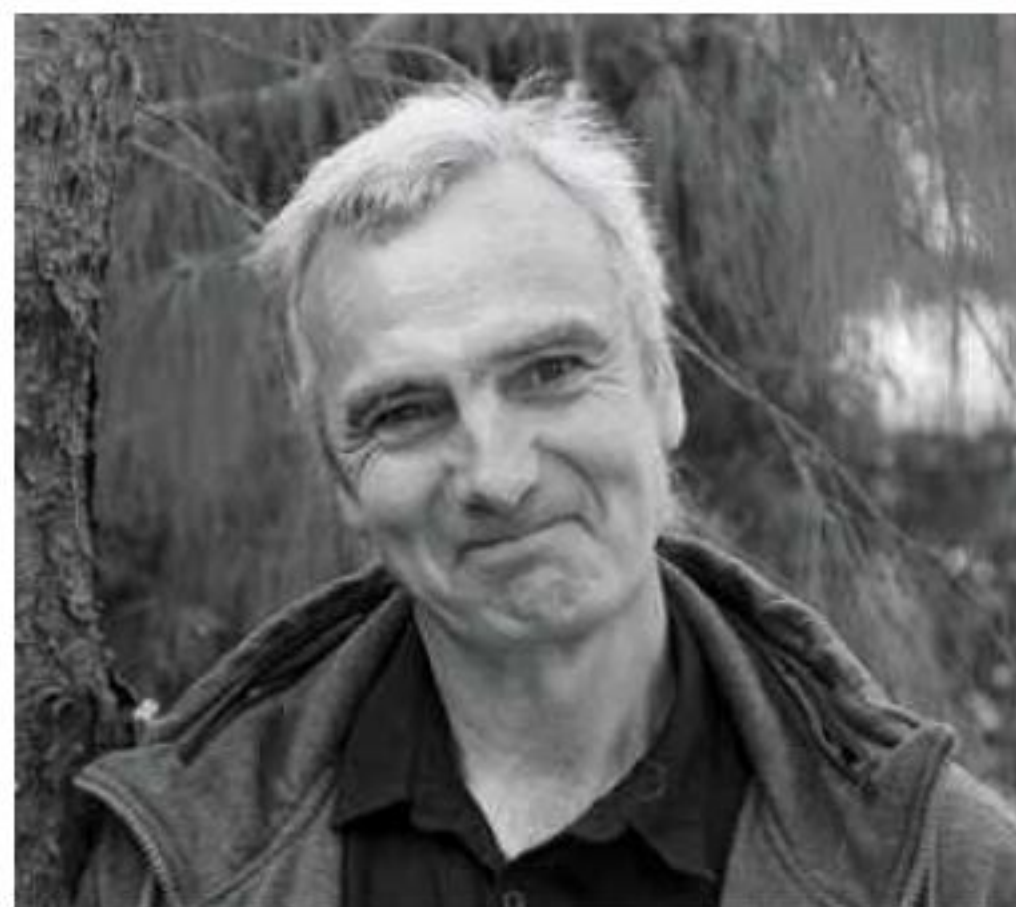


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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE BOOK
AGM Holds an Award of Garden Merit, from the Royal Horticultural Society. **JB** Jimi Blake, **TB** Tom Brown, **TC** Tom Coward, **KW** Keith Wiley, **FVZ** Fleur van Zonneveld
Hardiness ratings have been included where available.
For an explanation of what these mean see gardensillustrated.com/plants/plant-hardiness-ratings-explained

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SPRING

As warmer, longer days bring a burst of new growth, bulbs and blossom offer up delicate, cool-season colours alongside lush, fresh-green foliage with the tantalising promise of bright new blooms

SOLDANELLA VILLOSA

Many alpine plants have the reputation of being picky and difficult to grow, but that couldn't be further from the truth for this Pyrenean snowbell. Like most mountainous plants it prefers good drainage, but grows well in our clay soil. It has rounded, evergreen leaves that resemble coins – hence its name, which comes from the Italian word *soldi*, which means money. The flowers look like brush heads standing perkily on thin stalks above the round leaves. It's an excellent plant for the rock garden. **AGM.**

Height 20cm.

Origin Pyrenees.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun and part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Spring. **FVZ**



*ERYTHRONIUM
DENS-CANIS*

The dog's tooth violet naturalises and associates well with English bluebells and primroses in damp areas in dappled light before the tree canopies develop. I grow this plant in a strip of meadow along a north-facing wall, where it is slowly colonising each year. As the marbled foliage emerges and unfurls, nodding, star-like, pink flowers gracefully follow and hang above it. If grown in grass, refrain from mowing until July to allow the seeds to mature.

Height 15cm.

Origin Central and southern Europe, from Portugal to Ukraine.

Conditions Moist, free-draining soil including chalk; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 3a-7b.

Season of interest Early spring. **TB**

A DELICATE HONESTY, WITH A MORE COMPACT, BRANCHED HABIT THAN THE SPECIES

LUNARIA ANNUA 'CORFU BLUE'



JASON INGRAM

TRILLIUM KURABAYASHII

Trilliums are the wakerobins of North America and two are the state flowers of Ohio and Ontario in Canada. This species masqueraded for many years in older plant collections as either *T. sessile* or else *T. chloropetalum*. But, with its handsome, mottled leaves, *T. kurabayashii* is easier to grow than either of those two species, tolerating a more exposed position in my experience than any other trillium, although it prefers a more sheltered spot. Very happy to self-seed itself at Wildside, especially if annually mulched with leafmould in the winter.

Height 30-60cm depending on strain.
Origin Oregon and California, USA.
Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.
Season of interest Spring for flowers; early summer for foliage. **KW**

MATTHIOLA INCANA 'LUCINDA RED'

In the right conditions, you can have stocks in flower three months after sowing their seed. Once they've germinated, it is possible to separate the single- and double-flowering plants, depending on the colour of the young leaves: the lime-green seedlings will provide double flowers; the darker ones will be single. Both have merit, but I prefer to grow like with like. Feed initially with a nitrogen-based liquid feed to achieve good stem length; once budded, switch to a higher potash mix. Soil needs to be moist and fertile for long stems.

Height 50cm.
Origin Garden (species Spain to Greece).
Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.
Season of interest March to October (flowers three months after sowing). **TB**



JASON INGRAM



JASON INGRAM

LUNARIA ANNUA 'CORFU BLUE'

This is a favourite of mine. It is a delight in the spring with a delicate and more compact, branched habit than the more widely known species *Lunaria annua* (honesty). For best results plant at the front of a border, away from competition, where it will associate beautifully with *Elaeagnus* 'Quicksilver' and *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing'. If deadheaded, it will repeat flower, but allow some later flowers to develop into attractive translucent seedheads in autumn, and collect the seed for sowing in late summer. **AGM.**

Height 50cm.
Origin Corfu (species southern Europe).
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; sun for best flowering performance.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest Late spring. **TB**

THIS SUBTLE, LIME-GREEN FRITILLARY FITS PERFECTLY INTO THE SPRING COLOUR PALETTE

FRITILLARIA RADDEANA

JASMINUM POLYANTHUM

In March and April this evergreen climber is covered in clouds of richly perfumed, white flowers. I grow this jasmine under glass against a wall and prune heavily after flowering to prevent it sprawling forwards and taking up too much space. It's perfect for a well-lit conservatory or glasshouse. Feed with a balanced liquid fertiliser every couple of weeks during the growing season. In sheltered urban or coastal gardens, which are frost free, you can grow this jasmine outside with a bit of care, but it will not tolerate freezing temperatures. **AGM.**

Height 2.5-4m.

Origin China and Myanmar.

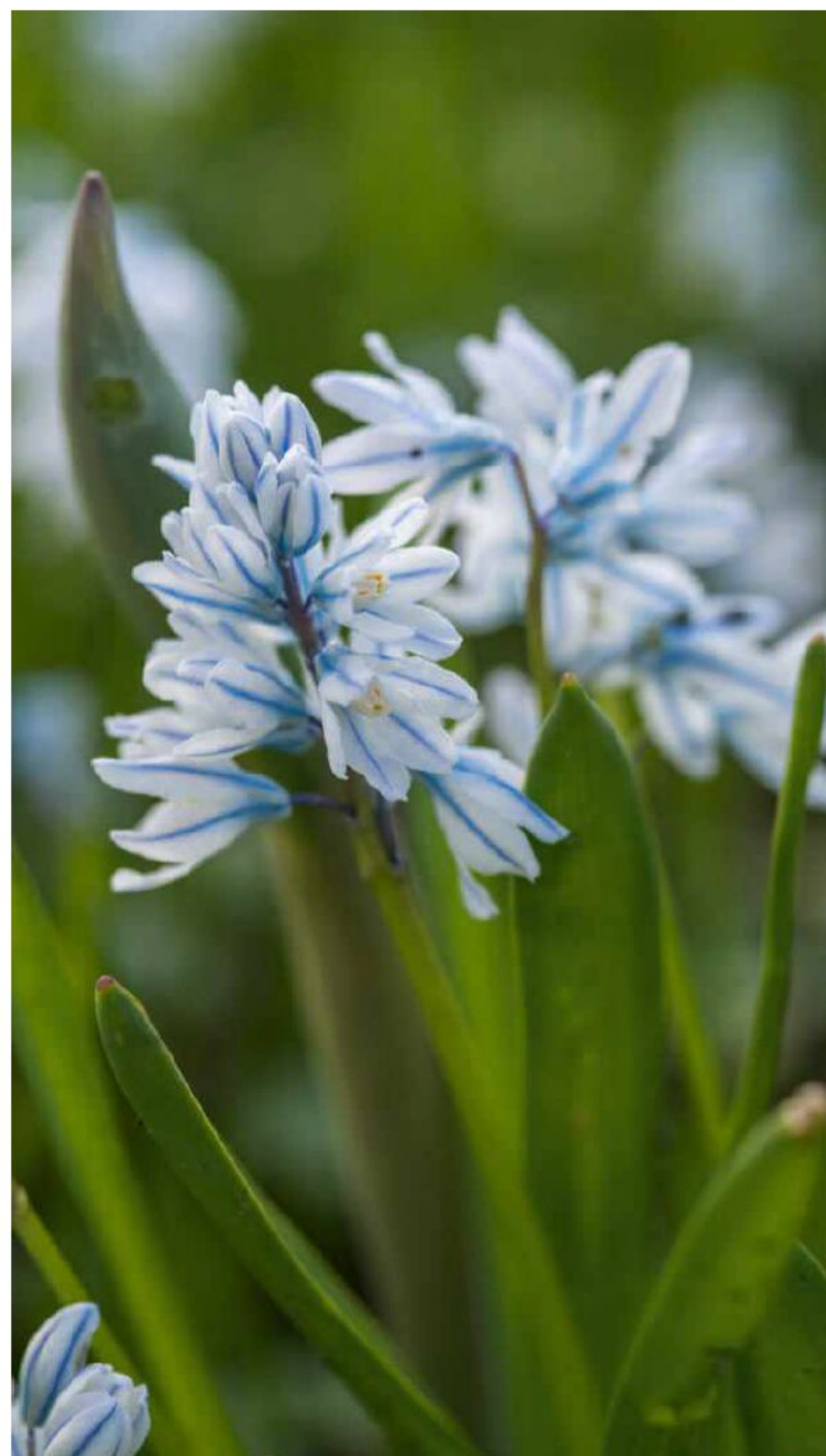
Conditions Well-drained, reasonable soil; full sun to part shade. Winter under glass.

Hardiness RHS H2, USDA 8a-11.

Season of interest Flowers from February to April. **TB**



JASON INGRAM



MAAYKE DERIDDER

PUSCHKINIA SCILLOIDES *VAR. LIBANOTICA*

The watery, pale-blue colour of this tiny little plant looks remarkable when massed plantings are viewed from a distance in early spring. Even when the weather is overcast, flowers are wide open. It naturalises easily and doesn't get in the way of later emerging plants. It's best grown in drifts under deciduous trees or in a border. Plant en masse alongside *Scilla forbesii* and *Primula vulgaris* and you will have an eye-catching, colourful spring display. **AGM.**

Height 10cm.

Origin Caucasus, Turkey, Iran, Lebanon.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Spring. **FVZ**

FRITILLARIA RADDEANA

Fritillaries feel like an unstoppable force of nature. You turn away for a couple of days and then suddenly there are numerous new stems with shiny green foliage. This fritillary's flowers have a beautifully subtle, lime-green colour, which fits perfectly into spring's colour palette. They're also large, making this a very striking plant. It is one of the first fritillaries to flower and prefers well-drained soil and hot, dry summers. After flowering, it evolves into large, angular seedpods that look wonderful when used in flower arrangements.

Height 70cm.

Origin Central Asia.

Conditions Well-drained, humus-rich soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Spring. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DERIDDER



MAAYKE DERIDDER

SCILLA PERUVIANA

Gardeners make me green with envy when their plots are sheltered enough to grow this magnificent *Scilla* outside. As I garden in a frost pocket, I am restricted to growing this bulb in a pot and must protect it from the extremes of wet and cold during the winter. With a little protection under glass, however, it will flower happily in March. Allow to dry out between watering and give it a period of dry dormancy during the summer. Grows well in chalk and any free-draining soil outside in a sheltered, sunny position.

Height 30-40cm.

Origin Iberian Peninsula, Italy and northwest Africa.

Conditions Sheltered, free-draining soil; sun or under glass.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest From early spring under glass. **TB**



JASON INGRAM

CORNUS MAS 'JOLICO'

After the greyness of winter, we often crave a little colour. But spring colour is much more welcome if it appears gradually, which is why the subtle beauty of this yellow *Cornus mas* is so much more appealing than the bright yellow of the ubiquitous forsythia. *Cornus mas* 'Jolico' is an older selection from Vienna and has only recently been rediscovered. Its bloom is richer and more intense than the usual *Cornus mas* and its dark-red fruits are much bigger – and delicious when turned into a jam. It also has fine autumn colour. **AGM.**

Height 4m.

Origin Europe, western Asia.

Conditions Medium moisture, well-drained soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Flowers in spring. **FVZ**



JASON INGRAM

RIBES SANGUINEUM 'ELKINGTON'S WHITE'

Although *Ribes* are hard to beat when it comes to reliable, spring-flowering shrubs, I admit that I've been a little snooty when it comes to using them myself. But 'Elkington's White' has changed all that, and opened my eyes to the elegance and sophistication of this spring staple. With its robust habit, and pure-white flowers, which develop from pendulous, grape-like buds in March, it provides structure and a welcome splash of colour in a mixed border. Once established, prune for shape after flowering.

Height 2m.

Origin Western USA, Canada.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-7b.

Season of interest Flowers in late spring. **TB**

LONG, ELEGANT RACEMES OF SOFT-YELLOW FLOWERS MAKE A TRANSLUCENT HAZE

STACHYURUS PRAECOX



JASON INGRAM

STACHYURUS PRAECOX

Stachyurus is the only genus in its family, Stachyuraceae, and is made up of just ten species. All are unusual, elegant shrubs from East Asia, but only three species are suitable for temperate gardens, and of those this is probably the most attractive and vigorous. *Praecox*, a Latin term meaning early, refers to its flowering season, which in a mild year starts in February. Long racemes of soft-yellow flowers make a translucent haze, which is most effective if you can plant several shrubs close together in a drift. Its autumn colour is also good. **AGM.**

Height 3.5m.

Origin Japan, Korea.

Conditions Versatile in most situations on an acid to neutral soil; seems happiest in sheltered, light woodland.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest February to April. **TC**

TULIPA TURKESTANICA

Tulipa turkestanica is one of the earliest tulips to flower and is always such a joy to see at the very beginning of spring. Like many of the species tulips, this is a really good perennial, coming back year after year, and spreading over time. We have had it established in some borders for nearly ten years, where the colonies with better drainage appear to have prospered the most. The cream, star-shaped flower has a yellow base, which on closer inspection is flushed with reddish green. It also has a wonderful scent. **AGM.**

Height 30cm.

Origin Central Asia to northwest China.

Conditions Rock garden or free-draining border; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

Season of interest February to April. **TC**



JASON INGRAM



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OSMANTHUS DELAVAYI

A small-leaved, evergreen shrub that covers itself for weeks with small, white flowers. In spring you can smell its strong, sweet scent from yards away. Normally seen as an amorphous mass of randomly directed branches, it can be carefully pruned and the branches thinned to produce a gracefully arching shape. This considerably enhances the flowering effect as well as creating more planting space beneath its canopy for other spring-flowering bulbs or perennials. Just removing crossing branches is a good start for achieving this effect. **AGM.**

Height 2-3m.

Origin China.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 9a-11.

Season of interest Spring for flowers, year round as evergreen shrub. **KW**

CORYLOPSIS PAUCIFLORA

Slow growing and compact enough to fit in almost any garden with neutral or acidic soil, this shrub should be far more widely planted than it is. It has charm and subtlety and, along with *Cornus mas* 'Jolico' (see page 11), is a good alternative to the yellow forsythias that dominate so many suburban gardens. Not only are the flowers sweetly scented, the young growth is handsomely bronze-coloured autumn colour is a beautiful butter yellow and the tracery of the bare twigs is a joy all winter long. Truly a shrub for all seasons. **AGM.**

Height 1.5m.

Origin Japan, Korea, Taiwan.

Conditions Acidic, well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

Season of interest Year round, but spring for flowers. **KW**

THE LARGE, CUP-SHAPED, PALE-PINK BLOOMS ARE SUPERB AGAINST A BLUE SKY

PRUNUS 'JACQUELINE'

CORYDALIS SOLIDA 'BETH EVANS'

In the wild, and in the garden if allowed to self-seed, *Corydalis solida* is very variable in its flower colour. The pink and red forms are mostly found in Romania, but 'Beth Evans' is a selected seedling of garden origin. It appears in early spring, flowers and dies back to underground tubers almost immediately, leaving no trace above ground for the rest of the year. As a result, knowing where it is planted is quite important, so I grow this plant in aquatic pots and sink these in the garden among other spring bulbs such as crocus.

Height 15cm.

Origin Garden (species Europe, from Finland and Sweden to Greece).

Conditions Cool soil, on the moister side; dappled shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Spring. **KW**



JASON INGRAM

RHODODENDRON 'CHRISTMAS CHEER'

A hybrid from *R. caucasicum*, this dramatic, early rhododendron has deep-pink buds that open to the palest pink, and starts flowering in February to January in a mild year (though never in time for Christmas) – but is at its best in March to April. These old hybrids were popular in the 19th century, when many great gardens were being created. Its name refers to the old practice of forcing the plant under glass to be brought into the house for Christmas decoration. **AGM.**

Height 1.5m.

Origin Garden (species northern Turkey, Caucasus).

Conditions Best on soils with pH of 6.5 or lower; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest February to April. **TC**



JASON INGRAM

SCILLA BIFOLIA

Bulbs of this plant were first established in the meadows of Gravetye Manor by former owner, the garden writer William Robinson in the 1880s, and over the years have spread to make carpets of sky blue. They work beautifully in combination with lemon-yellow daffodils, and are a delight among shrubs and borders. This blue carpet is a perfect prelude to the bluebells, which flower shortly after, continuing the display. Bulbs can be planted in autumn, but can also be spread around the garden by dividing clumps after flowering. **AGM.**

Height 10cm.

Origin Europe, western Russia.

Conditions Very versatile, grows well in most soils so long as not waterlogged; full sun to part shade. Excellent in meadows.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 2a-9b.

Season of interest March to April. **TC**



JASON INGRAM



JASON INGRAM

MAGNOLIA DAWSONIANA 'CHYVERTON RED'

One of the Asiatic magnolias with very large flowers that grow into large trees. Nearly all of this type of magnolia take at least ten years before they flower, so patience as well as space is required. Most also flower quite early in spring, so the flowers become susceptible to frosts, which is why the mild gardens of Cornwall in southwest England are a hot-spot for their cultivation. This one took 20 years to flower for me from scions from the original plant in Chyverton, Cornwall. It has the reddest flowers of any magnolia I have seen.

Height 10m.

Origin Garden (species China).

Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; sun to part shade, sheltered from strong winds.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Spring for flowers. **KW**

HELIOPHILA LONGIFOLIA

This gorgeous little blue flower first came to my attention when I became head gardener at Parham House & Gardens. It was used throughout the glasshouse, erupting and cascading between the pelargoniums and heliotropes. I sow seed in February for a late spring display and again in July to give me a splash of colour in early autumn. Heliophilas can be used to add delicacy to summer containers, once the threat of frosts has passed in May or June. I suggest supporting the wiry stems with a few birch or hazel twigs.

Height 50cm.

Origin South Africa.

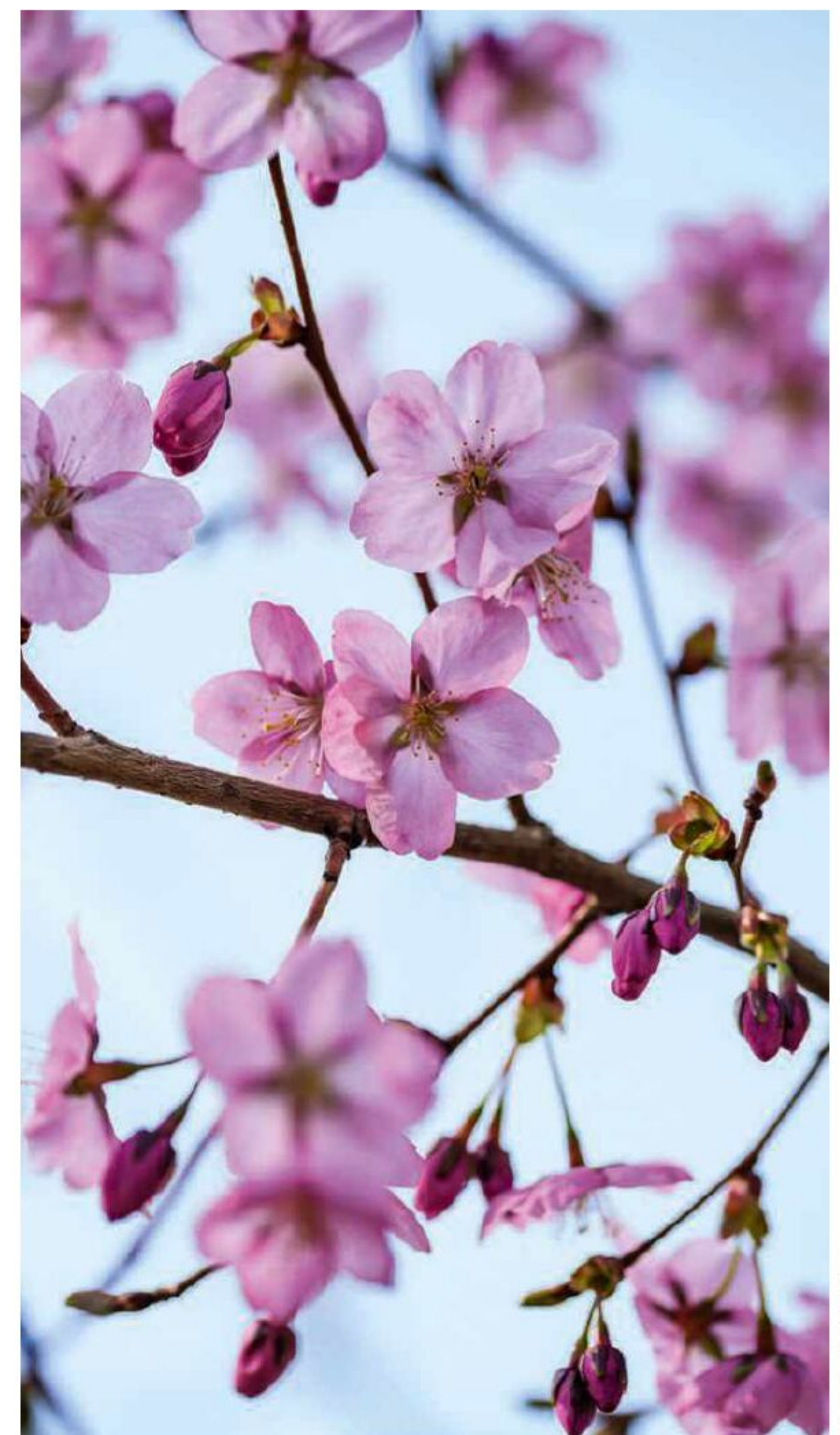
Conditions Well-drained, fertile soil; full sun. Ideal for containers.

Hardiness RHS H3.

Season of interest Flowers in late spring from a February sowing; can be succession sown. **TB**



JASON INGRAM



JASON INGRAM

PRUNUS 'JACQUELINE'

A relatively new introduction from the Kalmthout Arboretum in Belgium, and probably a hybrid of *P. sargentii*. Its large, cup-shaped flowers are a beautiful pale pink, which is a perfect colour with the blue sky as a backdrop. Its autumn colour is the most wonderful red and orange. Possibly one of the best pink ornamental cherries to grow. Reaching only around three to four metres and with such stunning spring and autumn displays, it is the perfect tree for the small garden. It will perform best in full sun but will tolerate part shade. **AGM.**

Height 4m.

Origin Garden (species northern Japan, Korea and Sakhalin, Russia).

Conditions Happy on most soil types; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

Season of interest March to April. **TC**

RHODODENDRON LUTESCENS
'BAGSHOT SANDS'

A lovely, delicate shrub with a long flowering season throughout spring. Its early, tissue-thin, primrose-yellow flowers are remarkably resilient to harsh weather, but it performs best in a sheltered spot, with part shade and protection from strong winds. A beautiful shrub in a woodland setting or sheltered aspect close to the house, provided you have acid soil. A very good cultivar, with deep bronzed new growth and slightly larger flowers than the straight species. Likes a regular mulch with leafmould. **AGM.**

Height 3m.

Origin China.

Conditions Works best in humus-rich, acidic soils; light woodland shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

Season of interest February to April. **TC**

HANGING CLUMPS OF THIS GOLDEN-YELLOW SEDGE CREATE A STUNNING EFFECT

CAREX ELATA 'AUREA'



JASON INGRAM

IRIS BUCCHARICA

This stunning little iris is a member of the group known as the Junos, which are characterised by their fleshy bulbs and leek-like foliage. There are some 60 species in this group, which come from mountainous regions in the Middle East and Central Asia. Most are very beautiful and quite tricky to grow, but this species is probably the easiest of the group and will establish and spread very happily, providing it has enough sun and drainage. We have an especially lovely clump, growing on the edge of a dry-stone wall, which combines beautifully with blue grape hyacinths. **AGM.**

Height 30cm.
Origin Tajikistan, northeast Afghanistan, Uzbekistan.
Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b
Season of interest March to April. **TC**

DICENTRA CUCULLARIA

This North American plant has several common names, but perhaps the most common is Dutchman's breeches, which alludes to its white flowers that look like the puff pants once worn by fishermen in the Dutch village of Volendam. Like *Dicentra canadensis*, which it also resembles, it is summer dormant and its fern-like, grey-green leaves disappear after flowering. But it blooms earlier than *D. canadensis* and has bulblets that look like pink shrimps, while those of *D. canadensis* look like kernels of corn, giving that plant its common name of squirrel corn.

Height 20cm.
Origin North America.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 3a-7b.
Season of interest Spring. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DERIDDER



MAAYKE DERIDDER

CAREX ELATA 'AUREA'

It was the well-known botanist and author EA Bowles who discovered the cultivar of this perennial, evergreen sedge growing in East Anglia and so gave it the common name of Bowles's golden sedge. It forms elegant, hanging clumps of such bright yellow it looks as though the sun is shining through it even in winter as in mild years the grass holds on to its yellow colour until late in the year. It needs a moisture-retentive soil as its leaves will burn if it gets too dry or too hot. However, in the right conditions its glorious golden colour creates an unbeatable effect. **AGM.**

Height 60cm.
Origin Europe, UK.
Conditions Moisture-retentive soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest Year round. **FVZ**

AN ESPECIALLY BEAUTIFUL AND UNUSUAL BLUE FORM OF OUR NATIVE WOOD ANEMONE

ANEMONE NEMOROSA 'ROBINSONIANA'

POLYGONATUM X HYBRIDUM 'BETBERG'

There are several species and cultivars of *Polygonatum* – all suitable for natural plantings in shady conditions – but this is a favourite. It has spectacular purple, almost-black, shiny new shoots that rise in spring with amazing power and virility, although it doesn't grow as fast as the straight species. The flowers hang from the stem in long lines – giving it its Dutch common name of sow with piglets – and in autumn these turn to poisonous, purple-black berries. Unfortunately, like all polygonatums, it is loved by snails and sawfly larva.

Height 70cm.

Origin Northern hemisphere.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to full shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Spring to autumn. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER



JASON INGRAM

LEUCOJUM AESTIVUM 'GRAVETYE GIANT'

A large, robust and vigorous form of this lovely native plant, selected at Gravetye by William Robinson. It has a long flowering season, and will accept most conditions, though it thrives best in a damp situation. It is useful in the spring border, working well among shrubs, and is an excellent plant to naturalise in a damp meadow. We have a lovely colony that combines perfectly under ornamental cherries. Bulbs can be planted in autumn and clumps divided in the garden after flowering. **AGM.**

Height 90cm.

Origin Garden (species most of Europe, Turkey, and parts of Iran).

Conditions Very versatile, but happiest in damp, heavy soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

Season of interest February to May. **TC**

ANEMONE NEMOROSA 'ROBINSONIANA'

This is an especially beautiful and unusual blue form of our native wood anemone. It was first found in the wild by William Robinson on a trip to Oxfordshire in the 1860s, and quickly introduced to cultivation. When he moved to Gravetye in the 1880s, he established it throughout the estate, and it continues to thrive. It seems to flower a little later than our normal white form. Best propagated by dividing the rhizomes in spring after the foliage has died down. **AGM.**

Height 10cm.

Origin Oxfordshire.

Conditions Tolerant of most soils, and will establish well in meadows, woodland and borders; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest March to April. **TC**



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LAMPROCAPNOS SPECTABILIS 'ALBA'

Bleeding hearts are enjoying something of a resurgence, with dark-red forms and those with golden foliage adding to our planting palette. One of my favourites is this ever-elegant, white cultivar – perfect for lighting up areas of shade and north-facing aspects in spring. This plant brings particular pleasure for me as it symbolises the start of a greater diversity in our gardens and heralds the transition from spring bulbs into the early summer. **AGM.**

Height 50cm.

Origin Garden (species Siberia, northern China, Korea and Japan).

Conditions Well-drained, fertile, soils that don't dry out; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

Season of interest Flowers late spring to early summer. **TB**

PACHYPHRAGMA MACROPHYLLUM

Butterflies and other insects adore this plant, as seemingly do many gardeners, because suddenly everybody is asking us about it. Its popularity is in part down to the rave reviews it's received from growers and gardening magazines. Praise that, in our opinion, is entirely justified. Its long-flowering, toothwort-like, white flowers, held above rounded, fresh-green foliage, are a beautiful sight, and it forms highly attractive almost-evergreen groundcover for shady areas. And if that wasn't enough it also has a delightful scent. We adore it too.

Height 40cm.

Origin Caucasus, Turkey.

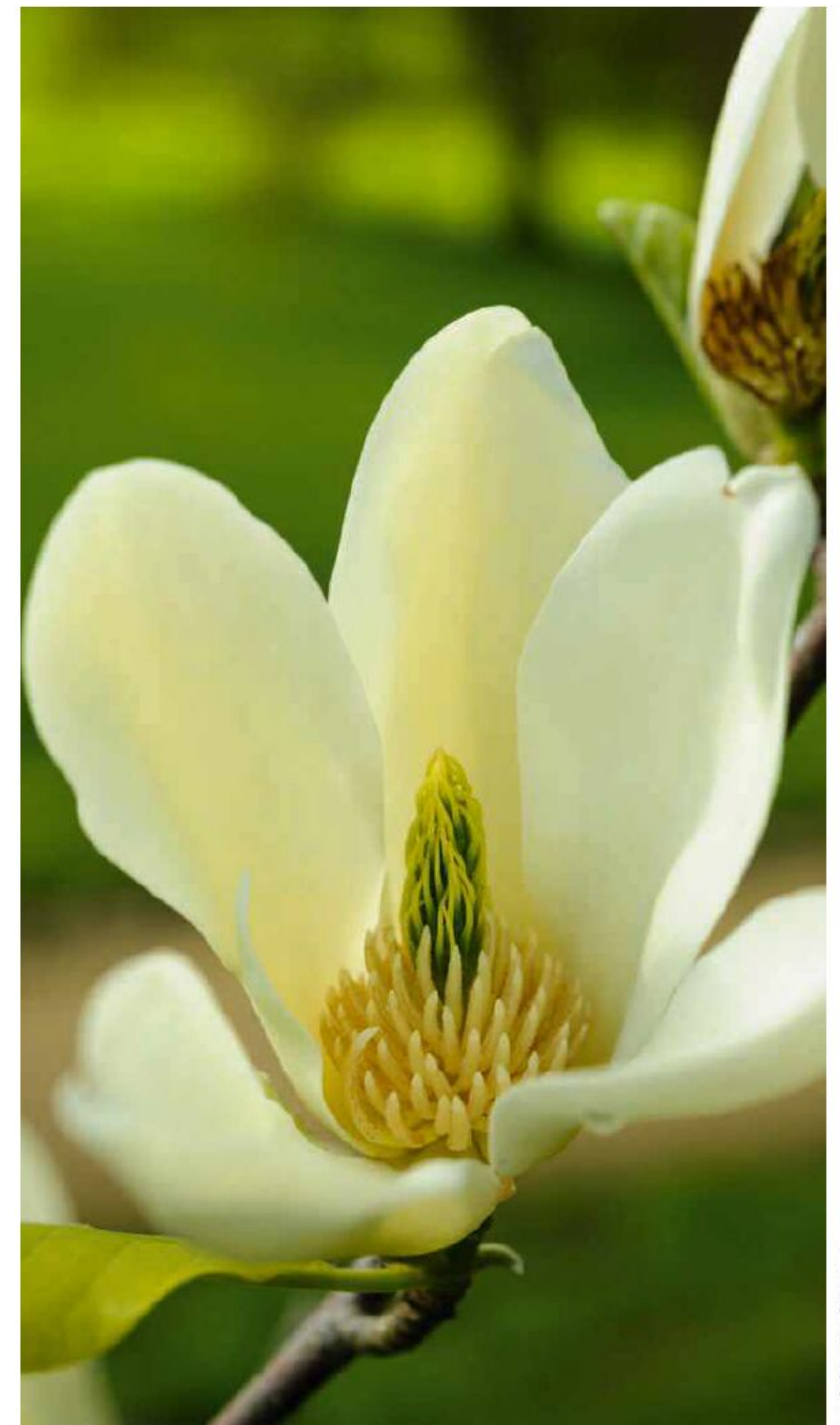
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part to full shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Spring to summer. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER



JASON INGRAM

MAGNOLIA 'YELLOW FEVER'

Recent breeding has produced some marvellous yellow-flowering magnolias. This beautiful, small tree, with a neat, upright habit, has large yellow buds that open and fade to cream with a delicious scent. Will tolerate most garden situations, but needs some summer moisture and protection from strong winds to achieve the best performance. To enhance the subtle yellow flowers, I underplant with *Narcissus* 'Yellow Cheerfulness', which flowers in the same colour tones at the same time.

Height 4-8m.

Origin Garden hybrid between *M. acuminata* and *M. denudata*.

Conditions Organically rich, neutral to acidic, well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest April to May. **TB**

WITH ITS ARTICHOKE-LIKE, ALMOST-BLACK FLOWERS, THIS TULIP HITS THE SPOT

TULIPA 'BLACK HERO'



TULIPA 'BLACK HERO'

At a time of year when gardens are awash with tulips, we gardeners are always searching for that special something that stands out from the crowd. With its artichoke-like, almost-black, flowers, 'Black Hero' really hits the spot and is a somewhat more sophisticated selection than the popular 'Queen of the Night'. I've found it works best with paler or more vivid companions, such as the orange, lily-flowered tulip 'Ballerina' and the pale-pink 'Angélique' tulip, to emphasise its sultry richness. A tall, upright form that flowers a little later than most.

Height 50cm.

Origin Garden origin.

Conditions Well-drained, reasonable garden soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

Season of interest April to May. **TB**



LUNARIA ANNUA 'CHEDGLOW'

I have always grown honesty and enjoy the way it self-seeds around the garden. Not only does it harmonise beautifully with bulbs, but the translucent seedheads give a wonderful texture in the summer too – particularly if dried and arranged in the house. This cultivar, however, ramps up the excitement levels by doing all of the above while boasting decadent, dark-purple foliage as well. If you want to make the most of this plant, then try planting it alongside bright-yellow tulips and forget-me-nots.

Height 50cm-1m.

Origin Garden (species central and southern Europe).

Conditions Moist, well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Late spring. **TB**

ANTHRISCUS SYLVESTRIS 'RAVENSWING'

A cultivar that offers the same effortless grace as our native cow parsley, and brings a strong sense of place to garden plantings. The dark-maroon foliage and stems are a great contrast to tulips, alliums, honesty and early performing perennials. Thin the flowering stems to enhance its transparency, particularly at the front of a border, and use the thinnings as cut flowers. If permitted, it will self-seed around your garden, but be mindful to remove any seedlings that lack the dark foliage from the offset.

Height 60cm-1.5m.

Origin Garden (species Europe).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun for best foliage colour.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Flowers late spring to early summer. **TB**



ACER PALMATUM
'CORALLINUM'

Japanese maples are great year-round plants. Most have a graceful winter form with the delicate tracery of their naked branches and are renowned for their autumn colour, but I value them for the spring colour of the new foliage. For this there is none more spectacular than 'Corallinum', which for six weeks puts even the massed flowering of azaleas in the shade. Sadly, there is no autumn colour worth mentioning. **AGM.**

Height 2m.

Origin Garden, bred at Hillier's Nursery, in 1910 (species Japan).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5b-9b.

Season of interest Spring to early summer for rich colour. **KW**

A BUSHY SHRUB WITH A WONDERFULLY LAX HABIT, IDEAL FOR CASCADING

EXOCHORDA X MACRANTHA 'THE BRIDE'

ERYTHRONIUM 'JOANNA'

April is the main erythronium flowering month in the UK. If you want your erythronium to produce a good clump of flowers, I'd recommend one of the hybrids and 'Joanna' is a really good choice. It is a cross between a pink-flowered species and a yellow one that serendipity has managed to merge into a winning combination that borders on apricot in colour, while maintaining a species charm in the flower form. Robust in growth and very free-flowering, it is an excellent erythronium for general planting. **AGM.**

Height 40cm in flower.

Origin Garden. An *E. revolutum* x *E. tuolumnense* cross, bred by John Amand and named for his daughter (species North America).

Conditions Fertile soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Spring. **JB**



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EXOCHORDA X MACRANTHA 'THE BRIDE'

A bushy shrub that has a wonderfully lax habit, making it ideal for cascading over a raised wall. Its cushion-like growth also makes it a strong contender at the front of a border. I use it in combination with *Clematis alpina*, as the two tussle with each other and erupt in a riot of flowers. A tough and hardy plant, but avoid excessively dry conditions, particularly in the summer when flower buds are forming. Lightly prune after flowering. **AGM.**

Height 1.5-2.5m.

Origin Garden hybrid between *E. racemosa* and unknown species.

Conditions Ideally moist but well-drained soil, tolerant of chalk and clay; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest April to May. **TB**



JASON INGRAM

PRUNUS GLANDULOSA 'ALBA PLENA'

I first encountered this excellent small cherry tree at Great Dixter, where it is grown as a coppice. In spring its waving shoots produce an abundance of comparatively large, pompom-like, double-white flowers. As soon as these start to fade, the entire plant is cut back to a stool, about 15cm from the ground. At this point it is good to feed well with bone meal, and the new shoots quickly grow back with stunning autumn colour before the following year's flower. A tough plant that will grow in most conditions, it is also quite tolerant of drought.

Height 1.5m.

Origin China.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest April to early June. **TC**



JASON INGRAM

CAMASSIA 'BLUE HEAVEN'

Camassias have always enriched our gardens, and can be a source of great elation as the tulips start to fade. Hoping to capitalise on this, I've started to grow 'Blue Heaven'. It's a cultivar that is more compact than others and showcases a pale-blue flower spike that can work equally well when grown in borders or in long grass. One of the reasons you often see camassias naturalised in grass is that their foliage becomes rather unsightly as it dies down, and grasses, especially as they grow longer in May and June, can help to disguise this.

Height 50cm-1m.

Origin Garden probably a hybrid between *C. cusickii* and *C. leichtlinii*.

Conditions Moist, well-drained soil, tolerant of chalk; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.

Season of interest April to May. **TB**

UVULARIA SESSILIFOLIA 'VARIEGATA'

A rare woodlander that should be better known. It forms a gently spreading clump of attractive leaves narrowly edged in cream, which gives the plant a creamy-grey appearance that contrasts well with the dark stems and pendent cream flowers. It does spread, but not frighteningly so. Only reaching a height of about 30cm, it is delicate and refined enough to coexist peacefully with many other woodlanders, such as trilliums and erthroniums, unlike the similar but distinctly more thuggish and larger *Disporum sessile* 'Variegatum', which will quickly swamp its neighbours.

Height 30-40cm.

Origin Canada and USA.

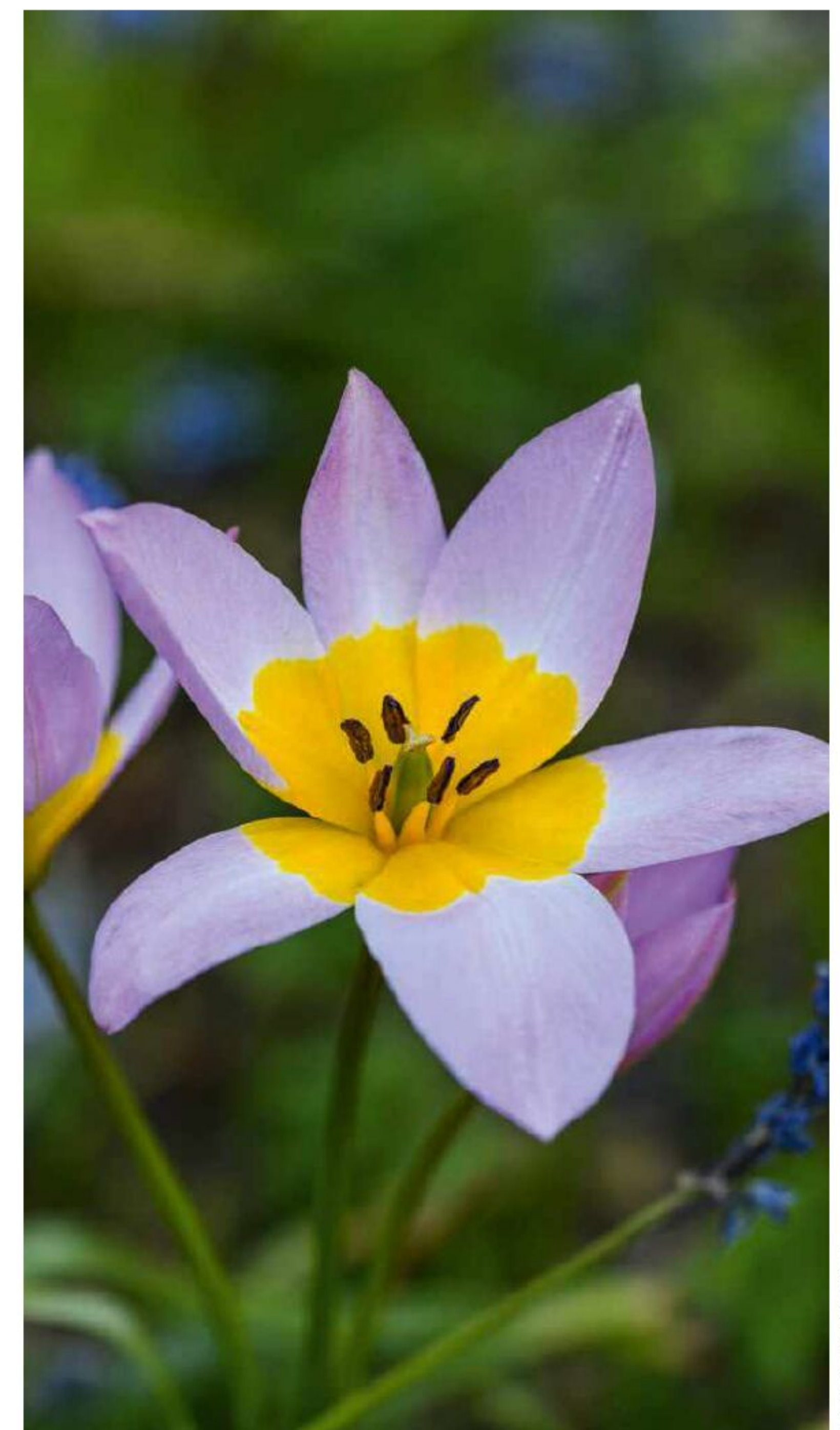
Conditions Woodlander for part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Spring and summer. **KW**



JASON INGRAM



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TULIPA SAXATILIS 'LILAC WONDER'

At Gravetye, we have naturalised this excellent perennial tulip among groundcover and shrubs through the wild garden. Stems can bear up to four pinkish-lilac flowers with rich-yellow centres, which work really well through the fresh new growth of *Epimedium*. A native of the mountains of Crete and parts of Turkey, it grows best in a sunny, free-draining spot. The bulbs are stoloniferous, enabling it to form good-sized clumps in the right conditions. The broad, glossy leaves come out very early in the spring, making it less dependable in colder areas. **AGM**.

Height 20cm.

Origin Crete and parts of Turkey.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

Season of interest April to May. **TC**



TULIPA 'BROWN SUGAR'

Hybrid tulips are a staple for spring colour in the flower garden. Their variety is their greatest charm and by using a mix of cultivars you can achieve a display from late March until the end of May. Most will only give a decent display for a year or two, but a handful work well as perennials, performing reliably year after year. This is a particularly lovely Triumph tulip with a gorgeous scent, which we have used in one border at Gravetye for several years. Best used in mixed borders among herbaceous perennials, its coppery-bronze colour works well with the purple of *Tulipa* 'Negrita'.

Height 30cm.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest April. TC

SLENDER, WAXY LEAVES WITH A PALE MID VEIN GIVE GOOD EFFECT AS A FOLIAGE PLANT

EUPHORBIA MELLIFERA



JASON INGRAM

DISPORUM LONGISTYLUM 'GREEN GIANT'

While species of *Polygonatum* have long been familiar garden plants, their close relative *Disporum* from Asia is possibly less well known. This is a shame because disporums are a great foliage plants for shady areas, forming clumps of tall, branched stems, laden with large leaves. In spring these are topped with slender, bell-shaped, soft-yellow flowers. This cultivar, introduced by Dan Hinkley from Sichuan Province in China, has new shoots that emerge in shades of brownish red before maturing to green.

Height 1m.

Origin China to Korea.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Spring to summer. **FVZ**



JASON INGRAM

EPIMEDIUM GRANDIFLORUM 'NANUM'

One of the smallest, if not *the* smallest, of epimediums, reaching only 15cm in height when in flower, with a later flush of leaves growing a little higher. The combination of a dome of dapper leaflets each margined with a border of purple red, beneath sprays of large, pure-white flowers opening from pink-flushed stems and buds, is a jewel-like joy of spring. Not surprisingly, such beauty bears close scrutiny, so this plant looks especially good when potted and placed at eye level.

Height 15cm.

Origin Japan.

Conditions Open, well-drained soil; full to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Spring mainly, summer foliage. **KW**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER

EUPHORBIA MELLIFERA

At Gravetye this stately, easy-to-grow euphorbia has been evergreen for the past ten years. Only in the coldest winters will it die back and behave like a herbaceous perennial, although it will always perform better in a sheltered spot. Its slender, waxy leaves with a pale mid vein, give very good effect as a foliage plant. In April to May it flowers and has the most beautiful honey scent, from which its name derives. It is drought tolerant and an extremely useful plant for dry shade. **AGM.**

Height 1.5-2.5m.

Origin Madeira and the Canary Islands.

Conditions Well-drained soil in a sheltered position; full sun or dry shade.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8b-9b.

Season of interest April to May for flowers, year-round for foliage. **TC**

ITS FRAGRANT, PURE-WHITE BLOOMS ARE ABUNDANT, EVEN ON YOUNG PLANTS

MAGNOLIA X LOEBNERI 'MERRILL'

CELMISIA SEMICORDATA 'DAVID SHACKLETON'

A plant gifted to me many years ago from the head gardener of Beech Park near Dublin, where it was first grown. In common with many people, I made the mistake of thinking celmisias were more of a Mediterranean plant until I saw them growing in an area called Arthur's Pass in New Zealand and realised that they actually need a cool, moist climate similar to that in my garden at Hunting Brook. This form has sword-like, pure-silver leaves and daisy-like white flowers. I propagate it from division in spring and replant in groups.

Height 20cm.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Moist, humus-rich, well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest Year round. JB



JASON INGRAM



MAAYKE DERIDDER

THERMOPSIS LANCEOLATA

Sometimes known as lanced-leaved false-lupine, *Thermopsis lanceolata* has tall, lupine-like flowers that rise up through grey-green leaves and in May can reach up to a metre in height. It's also sometimes confused with a baptisia. In late summer upright, dark, seedpods point upwards, looking like arrows between the felt-like leaves, and remain attractive for several months. It will develop many beautiful seedlings, although its seeds barely germinate unless soaked in hot water for 24 hours, then sown in the spring when cold. Unlike its close relative *Thermopsis montana*, it is not invasive.

Height 1m.

Origin Asia, Siberia, Japan.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Spring to summer. FVZ

MAGNOLIA X LOEBNERI 'MERRILL'

This striking hybrid, a cross between *M. stellata* and *M. kobus*, is one of the toughest and showiest magnolias. There have been a number of good selections since its introduction, displaying beautiful diversity, including this cultivar, bred at the Arnold Arboretum in Massachusetts and named after the former director Elmer Merrill. Its large, scented, pure-white flowers are extremely abundant, even on young plants. It's also very hardy. In the frosts of April 2021 nearly all our magnolias were damaged, but this one remained completely unblemished. AGM.

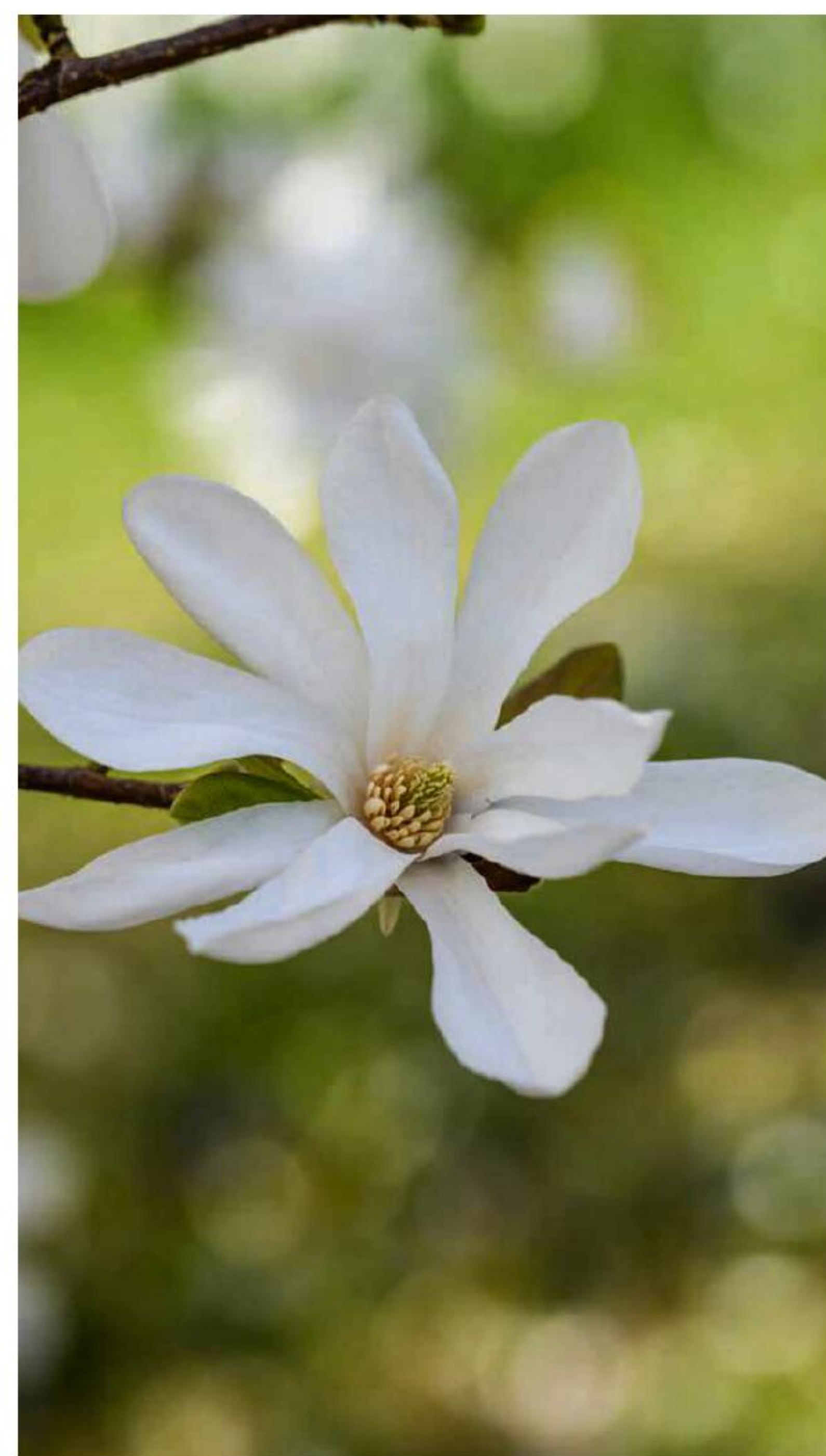
Height 4-6m.

Origin Garden (species Japan, Korea).

Conditions All moist but well-drained soils, including chalk; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest March to April. TC



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ATHYRIUM 'GHOST'

I have been growing the Japanese painted lady fern, *Athyrium niponicum* var. *pictum*, all my gardening life, but have found that its low stature and running habit is not sufficiently robust to withstand the general hurly-burly of life in the open garden. So, the discovery of a silver-leaved fern that was taller with the classic vase shape of wild ferns, and robust to boot, was a revelation. It has not disappointed and even though I have now grown many other silver-leaved ferns, this one still remains top of my pile for garden worthiness. **AGM.**

Height 60cm.

Origin Garden (species Himalaya, China, Japan, Korea).

Conditions Moist, well-drained soil; shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Spring and summer. **KW**

PSEUDOPANAX 'CHAINSAW'

I bought this whacky-looking pseudopanax from a plant fair at Tregrehan Garden in Cornwall, which is home to one of the best woody plant collections in the UK. It's similar to *Pseudopanax crassifolius* with its long rigid leaves resembling the chain of a chainsaw, hence the name. Its growth habit, as with so many *Pseudopanax*, makes it suitable for growing with perennials in a border where light is needed for the plants below. I have finally managed to root some cuttings in pure sand and hopefully some day I will have enough to plant a grove of them in the valley.

Height 3m.

Origin Garden (species New Zealand).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest Year round. **JB**



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EUPHORBIA CHARACIAS SUBSP. WULFENII

This handsome euphorbia makes a dramatic feature from March until May, with its huge heads of lime-green flowers borne on long, stiff stems and attractive, blue-grey foliage. It is very effective in drifts among the shrubs above our flower garden, creating a wonderful backdrop to spring plantings. Originating from rocky scrub in the Mediterranean, it is very drought tolerant. Flowering stems should be cut back as soon as they have finished, taking exceptional care not to come into contact with the milky, toxic sap, which can cause nasty blisters.

Height 1.2m.

Origin Eastern Mediterranean (southern France to Anatolia).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest March to May. **TC**

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EARLY SUMMER

*As temperatures rise, the garden brims with colour, vigour
and variety, from early blooming shrubs to floriferous
sun-lovers and hardy perennial performers*

KOLKWITZIA AMABILIS 'PINK CLOUD'

In recent years our affection for early summer-flowering shrubs has waned somewhat, certainly when compared with our enthusiasm for perennials and grasses. Kolkwitzias, however, deserve a renaissance. With its glorious, fountain-like habit, and abundance of pink, snapdragon-like flowers, this deciduous shrub is well placed to suit most mixed borders and plantings. Remove around 20 per cent of the plant at the base after flowering to rejuvenate. **AGM.**

Height 4m.

Origin Garden (species China).

Conditions Any reasonable garden soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Flowers May to June. **TB**



IRIS 'JANE PHILLIPS'

I use 'Jane Phillips' a lot. Its large, scented, pale-blue flowers appear profusely in early summer, making it perfect for cutting. To maintain your display, make sure that the rhizomes are exposed to the sun and look to divide your clumps every three to four years after flowering. Deservedly popular, this tall, bearded cultivar grows to around one metre in height, making it perfect for use as an accent of early colour in a border or gravelled area. Make sure the rhizomes avoid both competition and shade in high summer. **AGM.**

Height 1m.

Origin Garden (Mediterranean).

Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-10b.

Season of interest Late spring and early summer. **TB**

A STATUESQUE BIENNIAL WHOSE BIG, GREEN POMPOMS CONTRAST WELL WITH LUPINS

ANGELICA ARCHANGELICA



JASON INGRAM

ANGELICA ARCHANGELICA

A statuesque biennial that will self-seed freely through the borders. In the first year it makes a handsome foliage plant with its giant, parsley-shaped leaves. These are easily transplanted in autumn to flower in the right spot the following spring. Its height is very useful in the flower garden at this time of year, and its big, green, pompom flowers contrast well with the vertical accents of lupins. We remove ours as soon as they've seeded, so the gap can be filled with late-season interest. The fresh, young leaves can be used in salads, and in the past stems were often crystallised for cake decorations.

Height 2.5m.

Origin Northern Europe.

Conditions Grows well in all garden soils; full to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-7b.

Season of interest May to June. TC

BISTORTA OFFICINALIS 'SUPERBA'

The common bistort deserves its popularity as an excellent border perennial. It flowers in flushes from late spring to autumn, and is best cut back hard as soon as its first flush has finished. It works well naturalised in our meadows as part of our wild garden plantings. We often have a surplus of plants when the clumps in the borders need dividing, so we plant in drifts through the orchard. Over the years they've competed with turf and look stunning in the long grass flowering among dark-blue *Camassia quamash*. **AGM.**

Height 50cm.

Origin Europe, West Asia.

Conditions Adaptable and easy to grow in any moist soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest June to August. TC



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CAMASSIA LEICHTLINII SUBSP. *SUKSDORFII* CAERULEA GROUP

A genus of bulbous plants from the asparagus family, comprising five species from North America and one from South America. In the Pacific North West they were an important food for Native Americans; the bulbs having a sweet taste when roasted. This camassia has beautiful, star-shaped, dark-blue flowers on tall stems and is one of the earliest to flower. It works well among shrubs and in borders but is best in meadows. In the orchard it times perfectly with the apple blossom.

Height 1-1.5m.

Origin British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, California and parts of Nevada.

Conditions Prefers moist soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest April to May. TC

THESE BUNCHES OF BLUE FLOWERS HELD ON TALL, WAVING STEMS ARE GLORIOUS WHEN BACKLIT BY THE SUN

CORYDALIS ELATA

ROSCOEA 'ICE MAIDEN'

Roscoeas, members of the ginger family, are hardy, tuberous-rooted perennials that can be in flower from April right through to September. Pure-white ones, such as this, are fairly thin on the ground at any time of the year. This cultivar, one of the earliest of the roscoeas to flower each year, is a seedling selection by Irish plantsman Gary Dunlop that has pristine, pure-white *Roscoea humeana* f. *alba* in its DNA. Unlike the straight species, it is easy to grow, and seems to have very few foibles. The pale yellow in the flower centre is extremely distinctive.

Height 30-45cm.

Origin Garden (species China).

Conditions Well-drained, humus-rich soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

Season of interest Spring. **KW**



JASON INGRAM



MAAYKE DERIDDER

CORYDALIS ELATA

These bunches of blue flowers held on tall, waving stems are at their most beautiful when they are backlit by the sun, which then highlights the flower's beautiful, subtle veins. It's one of several blue *Corydalis* recently introduced from Sichuan Province in China. Perhaps the best known is the appropriately named *C. flexuosa* 'Blue Panda' from Sichuan's Wolong Panda Reserve, but this form performs well in both cool and hot summer climates. It flowers from spring into summer, and its fresh-green leaves make it a good companion for yellow-green flowering plants.

Height 50cm.

Origin China.

Conditions Well-drained soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season Spring and summer. **FVZ**

ENKIANTHUS *CAMPANULATUS*

An upright, deciduous shrub native to woodland in Japan. When in flower it is a beautiful sight as the plant appears to drip with small, nodding, bell-shaped flowers that are creamy-yellow with pinkish veining. It will bloom for about three weeks, and is best grown in part shade; we have a lovely specimen under a large handkerchief tree, making a fantastic combination when they are both in full flower. Autumn colour can be variable; good forms have a noteworthy orange or red display. **AGM.**

Height 3.5m (large specimens can reach 5m).

Origin Japan.

Conditions Acid to neutral soil; sheltered, full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-7b.

Season of interest May or June. **TC**



JASON INGRAM



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CYNANCHUM ASCYRIFOLIUM

Until it starts flowering, this can seem a rather dull, albeit healthy-looking, plant. But as soon as the deliciously scented clusters of star-shaped, white flowers appear, it becomes a pleasure to behold. It looks similar to many other plants in the Apocynaceae or dogbane family, especially the climbing genus *Stephanotis*, and is sometimes known as false bush *Stephanotis*. It was collected in 1995 in Yunnan Province, China, growing in rocky soil, but it performs well in our Dutch clay soil, where it has proved a very hardy perennial.

Height 60cm.

Origin Japan, China, Korea.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Summer. **FVZ**

EREMURUS HIMALAICUS

Originating from areas with semi desert-like conditions, foxtail lilies are, to say the least, pretty tough. The fleshy-rooted perennials thrive in free-draining, sun-baked positions, and in early summer their stately, white flowers tower above other plants on leafless stems in a majestic fashion. They dislike disturbance, and competition and shade from other plants, so to prevent accidentally lifting their shallow, octopus-like root systems while they're dormant, I mulch them with gravel to highlight their position in a border.

Height 2m.

Origin Afghanistan, northwestern Himalayas.

Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest May and June. **TB**



MAAYKE DERIDDER



MAAYKE DERIDDER

AMSONIA TABERNAEMONTANA VAR. SALICIFOLIA

In early spring, the young shoots of this variety are instantly recognisable by their black-red colour. These create a lovely contrast with the open clusters of star-shaped, greyish, pale-blue flowers that appear in late spring. It's a slow-growing plant that will eventually produce long-lived, sturdy, arching clumps, with willow-like foliage that turns yellow in autumn. It's a perennial that works well in both prairie-style plantings or wildflower meadows.

Height 80cm.

Origin Southern and eastern North America.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

Season of interest Spring to autumn. **FVZ**

IN THE ALLIUM LOTTERY, I'VE HIT THE JACKPOT WITH THIS RELIABLE CULTIVAR

ALLIUM 'PURPLE RAIN'



JASON INGRAM

VIBURNUM PLICATUM 'ROSACE'

I remember the day I first saw this plant in full flower in a garden as clearly as if it were yesterday. The plant I saw was about 2m high with crinkled, coppery-coloured leaves, and it was sporting rounded heads of soft-pink flowers all along the top of its layered branches. I thought it was one of the most beautiful flowering shrubs I had ever seen. Having grown it ever since, familiarity has not dimmed my enthusiasm. After flowering, the leaves turn green and best colour is achieved by growing in nearly full sun.

Height 2m.

Origin Garden (species China, Japan, Taiwan).

Conditions Good, humus-rich soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Early summer. **KW**

ALLIUM 'PURPLE RAIN'

Like many gardeners I know, I'm always on the look out for reliable, perennial performance in an allium. I've played the allium lottery for many years, but with this one I've hit the jackpot. It's a cultivar of *Allium jesdianum*, which has proven to be reliable in my garden, not only producing a good-sized flower but reappearing after some of the toughest winters, increasing in number each time. I use it with roses, perennials and grasses in naturalised and formal situations. Worth trying if you fancy a change from the ever-popular 'Purple Sensation'. **AGM.**

Height 60cm.

Origin Garden (species Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq).

Conditions Moist, free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.

Season of interest Early summer. **TB**



JASON INGRAM



MAAYKE DE RIDDER

SALVIA LOVE AND WISHES (= 'SERENDIP6')

This bushy salvia has been winning well-deserved plaudits and awards since its introduction at the 2015 RHS Chelsea Flower Show. It was bred in Australia by John Fisher and is the third colour in his Wishes series following on from 'Wendy's Wish' and Embers Wish (= 'Sal 0101'). It flowers for months, producing deep-purple and red flowers with matte-purple calyces on long, burgundy stems. Works equally well as part of a perennial border or grown in a pot.

Height 80cm.

Origin Garden hybrid of *S.buchananii* x *S.* 'Purple Majesty'.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3.

Season of interest Summer to autumn. **FVZ**

SYRINGA VULGARIS
'WILLIAM ROBINSON'

The common lilac, *S. vulgaris*, is native in mountainous regions of Eastern Europe. It is a variable species that was highly hybridised in the 19th century, resulting in more than 500 named cultivars. 'William Robinson', named after the garden writer who created the gardens at Gravetye Manor, has large panicles of double, pinkish-lilac flowers and exceptional scent. Prune straight after flowering by removing flowered wood.

Height 4m (can be controlled by pruning).

Origin Bred by Victor Lemoine in 1899, Nancy, France.

Conditions Happy on most soils and will thrive on chalk; flowers best in full sun but tolerates part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest May. TC

LEND A NATURALISTIC EASE TO THE BORDERS, MOVING EFFORTLESSLY IN THE BREEZE

CHAMAENERION ANGUSTIFOLIUM 'ALBUM'

CONVALLARIA MAJALIS 'FERNWOOD'S GOLDEN SLIPPERS'

An aptly named lily of the valley, with lush, golden-yellow foliage that stays this beautiful sunny colour until autumn. I love lily of the valley, not only for its sweet scent and beautiful, tiny bells, but also because it's imbued with so much symbolism. Despite the fact every part of the plant is poisonous, one of its most common associations is with youth and love – one reason it is so often found in wedding bouquets. I encourage everyone to bring a vase of it into the house.

Height 25cm.

Origin Garden (species across Europe to Caucasus).

Conditions Calcareous soils; dry, shady woodland.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

Season May. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER



JASON INGRAM

WISTERIA FLORIBUNDA F. ALBA 'SHIRO-NODA'

I love wisterias of all sorts and at least one would definitely make my desert island list of plants. I grow many as free-standing shrubs with one or more short trunks, given a strong support in their early years until they can support themselves. Any wisteria can be grown like this, and then pruned in the normal way to make wonderful specimen plants. *W. floribunda* cultivars tend to have longer racemes of flowers, and this highly scented cultivar flowers slightly later than others, and is simply magnificent. **AGM.**

Height Climber to 6m.

Origin Japan.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Early summer for flowers. **KW**

TROLLIUS X CULTORUM 'TALEGGIO'

With bowl-like, double, lemon blooms that appear in early summer when softer yellows can be hard to find, this globeflower is a standout plant. Ideally suited to a position in the garden that retains moisture through summer. All being well, divide every few years to promote vigour. Compared to its brightly coloured, hybridised siblings, 'Taleggio' associates well with a variety of colour palettes, complementing old-fashioned roses and a variety of mixed plantings. Should be used more often.

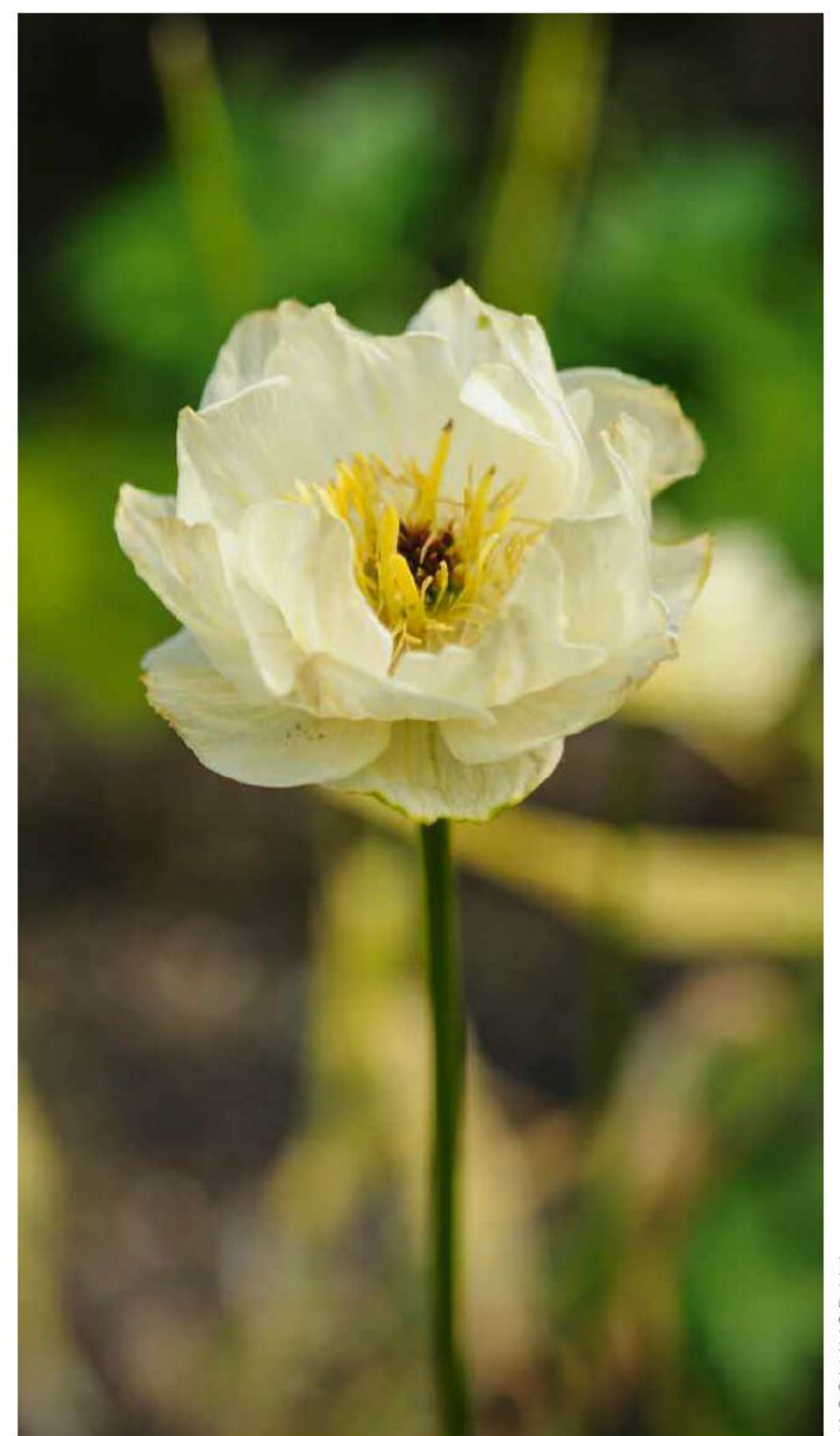
Height 1m.

Origin Garden hybrid of *T. europaeus*, *T. chinensis* and *T. asiaticus*.

Conditions Moist, well-drained soil; sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.

Season of interest May until June. **TB**



JASON INGRAM



JASON INGRAM

LIBERTIA IXIOIDES

This is a beautiful and architectural evergreen perennial from the *Iris* family that is native throughout New Zealand. Its ridged flower spikes are elegant in bud, before opening with three-lobed, pure-white flowers. These look especially lovely in the evenings when they float like moths. There are several named cultivars with gold or bronze variegation that are well worth growing. I prefer the normal olive-green, spiky foliage, which can make an attractive clump at the front of the border. Dead brown leaves should be carefully removed at the start of spring.

Height 1m.

Origin New Zealand.

Conditions Well-drained soil; sheltered, sunny spot.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7a-9b.

Season of interest May to June. TC

LUZULA NIVEA

Despite appearances, *Luzula nivea* is neither a grass nor a sedge. It is, in fact, a member of the rush family or Juncaceae, and is more commonly known as snow-white wood rush. The snow white in the name comes from the sprays of fluffy, white flowers that rise from June to July on rounded stems above the grey-green foliage. It's a useful plant for shady areas, especially when planted en masse, or for filling in the spaces between shrubs. Its evergreen leaves with their tufted edges make an attractive addition to flower arrangements whether they are used fresh or dried.

Height 50cm.

Origin Central and southern Europe.

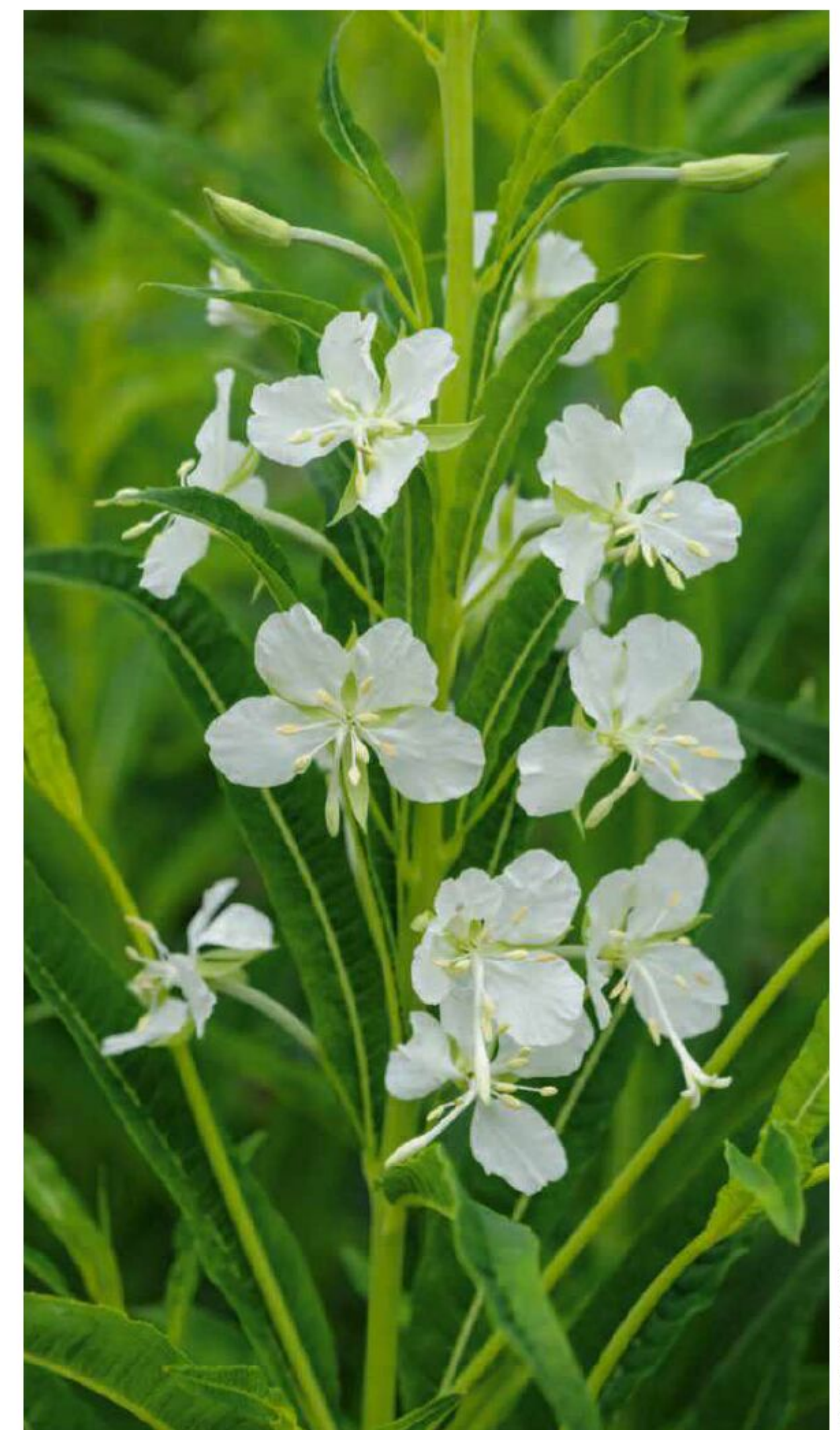
Conditions Moist to dry soil; part to full shade.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest Year round. FVZ



MAAYKE DE RIDDER



JASON INGRAM

CHAMAENERION ANGUSTIFOLIUM 'ALBUM'

This white rosebay willowherb lends a naturalistic ease to the borders, both in its appearance and in the way that it effortlessly moves in the breeze; in this way it is reminiscent of its wild cousin. In my experience, it tends to grow on its own terms. In spring, lime-green shoots appear slightly off centre to where they grew the year before. Certainly not a thug but more of a wanderer through the border, it pops up in and around other perennials and shrubs and does not freely self-seed (at least not for me).

Height 1.5m.

Origin Temperate Northern Hemisphere.

Conditions Reasonable garden soil, tolerant of clay; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 2a-7b.

Season of interest Mid to late summer. TB

GILLENIA TRIFOLIATA
'PINK PROFUSION'

This beautiful plant was discovered in the wild in 1987 by the plantsman Paul James in Virginia, USA. It was introduced to the wider plant-growing world in 2002 by the American botanical garden the Mt Cuba Center in Delaware. It pops up in late spring with fragile-looking, purple shoots that quickly grow into tall, branching, burgundy-purple stems that have purple green leaves and a wealth of butterfly-like, soft-pink flowers. In autumn, the leaves turn to orange and yellow.

Height 70cm.

Origin USA.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Spring to summer. **FVZ**

THE DUSKY-RED, BOTTLEBRUSH FLOWER SPIKES COMBINE WELL WITH ITS GREY-BLUE FOLIAGE

SANGUISORBA MENZIESII



MAAYKE DERIDDER

PIMPINELLA MAJOR 'ROSEA'

This lacy, pink umbellifer is a welcome companion to the many white umbellifers we use in our garden. It is one of the tall meadow plants we call *hochstaudenflur* in the Netherlands and is propagated from seed as well as vegetatively, which explains why there are so many different shades of pink in circulation. The deep-pink forms are more interesting than the paler-pink ones. It looks like a pink Queen Anne's lace – and really does resemble precious lace. Its shiny, fern-like, green leaves also make it useful as a groundcover plant.

Height 60cm.

Origin Central Asia, Caucasus, Mediterranean region.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Spring to summer. **FVZ**

LILIUM POMPONIUM

A small lily with a difference that relishes a really warm, sunny spot. Although it originally comes from the limestone mountain ranges of the southern Maritime Alps, in cultivation it does not demand a limey soil. In the garden, as in the wild, it usually produces only two or three tightly curled, deep orange-red Turk's cap flowers. I grow it in a very stony soil, protected from our high rainfall, where in a good year, each stem can produce upwards of 15 flowers. It can be short-lived, but it is easily raised from seed, usually flowering by the third year.

Height 30-60cm.

Origin Southern France, Italy.

Conditions Well-drained, soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Early summer. **KW**



JASON INGRAM



MAAYKE DERIDDER

SANGUISORBA MENZIESII

This was our first sanguisorba and it is still our favourite – it's also much loved by butterflies. It flowers far earlier than other sanguisorbas, adding height to a border or prairie plantings from the end of May with thick, dusky-red spikes that are surrounded by a soft-pink mist. These brush-like flowers held on purple-red stems combine beautifully with its fernlike, grey-blue foliage. After flowering it can become a bit sloppy, but you can improve this with a rigorous cut. It works well as a cut flower and can be grown in a pot, but I think it looks best in a moist border alongside blue *Iris sibirica*. **AGM.**

Height 1m.

Origin Northwestern North America.

Conditions Average or moist soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Spring to autumn. **FVZ**

I ADORE THIS ROSE FOR ITS UNUSUAL VIOLET-PURPLE TONES AND WELL-MANNERED HABIT

ROSA 'VEILCHENBLAU'

DIANTHUS CARTHUSIANORUM

Far from the rather dated reputation of the 'Doris' pink, this little species of *Dianthus* has bucked the trend and found itself very much in favour, even gracing the catwalk that is the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. These lovely plants, with their small, magenta flowers, displayed in dense, terminal clusters on wiry stems, provide a rare delicacy and effortless, naturalistic quality that other *Dianthus* simply don't offer. Plant it in a sun-baked position that has reasonable drainage for the best performance.

Height 50cm.

Origin Southern and central Europe.

Conditions Well-drained soil, tolerant of chalk; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-10b.

Season of interest Summer. **TB**



JASON INGRAM



JASON INGRAM

ALLIUM ATROPURPUREUM

This is not one of those alliums that increases each year and clumps up beautifully. However, I can completely forgive it this one fault and happily treat it as an annual, as the intense, dark-purple flowers work so well with perennials at this time of year. You'll find the bulbs inexpensive and I would suggest planting them in groups of five to seven and work them through clumps of early summer perennials such as artemisias and nepetas as well as with later-flowering perennials such as phlox to give interest and punch in early summer.

Height 1m.

Origin Hungary to Turkey.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Early summer. **TB**



JASON INGRAM

ROSA 'VEILCHENBLAU'

I adore this rose not just for its unusual tones of violet-purple and its fruit-scented flowers but also for its well-mannered, graceful habit, trained on a wall or fence. Classed as a rambler, this rose is well behaved and not too vigorous, like some rambling roses. A superb flush of semi-double flowers appears in early summer and into July, which proves to be quite a talking point when in full swing. I find this rose incredibly versatile in the garden, working well with various colour schemes and associating nicely with most other plants. **AGM.**

Height 2.5m.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Moist, free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest May to June. **TB**



JASON INGRAM

RODGERSIA PINNATA 'BUCKLAND BEAUTY'

A dark-pink seedling we raised from *R. pinnata* 'Superba' while at The Garden House. In the wild, rodgersias often grow on stream banks and like a moisture-retentive soil, without being waterlogged. After flowering, the flowerheads in this cultivar turn dark red, and are excellent for use in dried-flower arrangements. The handsome, crinkled foliage appears late in spring, with the flowering stems pushing up first, so they are vulnerable at this time to late spring frosts. This late leafing means it is possible to grow early spring bulbs among the roots. **AGM.**

Height 1m.

Origin Garden (species China).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.

Season of interest All summer. **KW**

CRAMBE CORDIFOLIA

I challenge you to walk past a *Crambe cordifolia* in all its glory and not be blown away by its colossal cloud of small, white flowers in early summer. In a mixed border, there are few plants that rival its spectacle. As with delphiniums, I'd advise planting *Crambe* towards the back of the border, to enable plants that climax later in the season to disguise its deterioration as the summer heat intensifies. The sprays of seeds provide interest following the flowers, but the kidney-shaped foliage is little to write home about. As with most brassicas, *Crambe* enjoys a fertile garden soil. **AGM.**

Height 2m.

Origin Caucasus.

Conditions Deep, fertile and moist soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Early summer. **TB**



JASON INGRAM



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PAPAVER SOMNIFERUM 'LAUREN'S GRAPE'

If you're going to grow a somniferum poppy, make it this one. Once you've tried 'Lauren's Grape' and appreciated its sophistication and sultry, bowl-like, dark-purple flowers, you'll be forever particular about your poppy selections. I start seed off early in the year and treat as an annual, although the seedlings will overwinter in free-draining spots. The blue-green seedheads add superb form to a cut-flower arrangement; and do save the seed for the following year, once the pods have dried.

Height 1.5m.

Origin Garden (species southeast Europe and western Asia).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest Early summer, seedheads persist into winter. **TB**

AN EXOTIC-LOOKING AROID WITH DISTINCTIVE, HOODED SPATHES, STRIPED PALE PINK

ARISAEMA CANDIDISSIMUM



GERANIUM PRATENSE 'WISLEY BLUE'

This beautiful form of cranesbill has real stature when it flowers, particularly when grown up a domed support of hazel or birch, providing height in the border. The classic, powder-blue flowers are profuse in early summer, giving a burst of colour to mixed plantings. Once the flowers have faded, the plant can be cut to the ground, to enable a fresh flush of foliage to emerge, giving a neat and compact foil for other emerging plants. Like most geraniums, it is very versatile and is content in many garden situations and schemes.

Height 1.5m.

Origin Garden (species Europe and Asia).

Conditions Reasonable, well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Early to midsummer. **TB**

ARISAEMA CANDIDISSIMUM

The distinctive, hooded, stripy, pink spathes of this exotic-looking aroid make it one of the best arisaemas for flowering. It emerges from the ground as late as early June, and quickly produces flowers before the leaves appear. When it is settled, these trifoliate leaves can be as much as 45cm across, at which time it becomes a very handsome foliage plant for late summer. The first frost of autumn will finish this display, and it will spend the next seven or eight months below ground as rounded and flattened, fleshy tubers, so make sure you mark its position well and protect it with a thick mulch. **AGM.**

Height 30cm.

Origin China.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; warm spot in part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-7b.

Season of interest All summer. **KW**



HESPERIS MATRONALIS

Our first sweet rocket was grown from a free seed packet on *Gardens Illustrated*, and it has gone on to become one of our best-loved performers. Its clouds of mauve flowers work well with the vertical lines of wisteria and lupins and truly come into their own in the evening light. The Greek god Hesperus was known as the Evening Star, and evening is when the perfume of sweet rocket is at its best, filling the garden with its scent just in time for drinks. We sow in July and grow on in pots for autumn, placing plants where they will flower the following year. Chef also likes to use it as an edible flower.

Height 1m.

Origin Native to Eurasia.

Conditions Moist but well-drained loam or sand; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

Season of interest May to June. **TC**



IRIS ENSATA 'ROSE QUEEN'

Still known by some as *Iris kaempferi*, the Japanese water iris is one that is happy when in growth under shallow water, but prefers to be drier when dormant. It is much loved in its native Japan, where pond levels are often manipulated through the seasons to specifically suit it. However, it doesn't need to be grown in water as long as the soil retains moisture, and it is growing close to water where it is certainly looks at its best. 'Rose Queen', with its distinctive flower colour, has smaller, more delicate flowers than many other ensatas. **AGM.**

Height 75-90cm.

Origin Garden (species Japan and Far East).

Conditions Rich, moist soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Early summer. **KW**

UPRIGHT INFLORESCENCES OF PEA-LIKE FLOWERS MIRROR THE RACEMES OF WHITE WISTERIA

LUPINUS 'NOBLE MAIDEN'

BEGONIA LUXURIANS

This architectural, palm-leaved species, with sprays of delicate white flowers, will not tolerate a frost but will quite happily survive during the winter months with a little protection, say in a frost-free conservatory or greenhouse. When the risk of frost has passed, plant out in a container. Feed and water to achieve an impressive specimen relatively quickly, then enjoy the glorious umbrella-like leaves throughout summer. Also try associating it with tropical planting schemes, such as cannas, dahlias, zinnias or *Fuchsia boliviana*. **AGM.**

Height 1.5m.

Origin Brazil.

Conditions Well drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H1B, USDA 10a-11b.

Season of interest May until first frosts. **TB**



JASON INGRAM



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KNIPHOFIA THOMSONII

This *Kniphofia* is very different to most people's vision of a red hot poker. Instead of having a closely packed spike of flowers, this species looks more like an aloe, with widely spaced, soft-orange flowers, each gracefully curving downwards. Its growth habit is also different as, like the flowers, instead of making a sizeable clump, it runs gently, forming a widely spaced colony of rosettes, each with a limited number of decumbent leaves. Repeat flowering through summer. If there is one catch, it would have to be that it is not quite as hardy as some.

Height 60-90cm.

Origin East Africa.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest Summer. **KW**



JASON INGRAM

OENOTHERA STRICTA 'SULPHUREA'

This is the pale-yellow version of the sand evening primrose, and is a short-lived perennial or biennial that I hope never to be without. It will self-seed so, as long as there is bare ground for the seedlings to colonise, there should really be no reason to lose it. As its name suggests, the scented flowers open a pale yellow in late afternoon, each one turning by the morning to a wonderful apricot colour for its final few hours before dropping. The whole effect is accentuated by the fact that it has a purple-red flush to the buds and stems.

Height 60-90cm.

Origin Garden (species Argentina, Chile).

Conditions Any well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-10b.

Season of interest All summer. **KW**



JASON INGRAM

LUPINUS 'NOBLE MAIDEN'

Lupins are a wonderful group of plants. So many are worth growing, but the best performers in our garden are those developed by horticulturist George Russell on his Yorkshire allotment. This lovely selection has tall spikes of cream buds that open to pure white, its upright inflorescences of pea-like flowers mirroring the white racemes of wisteria. We sow seed in July for flowering plants the following year and replace plants every three to four years when they get tired.

Height 90cm.

Origin *L. polyphyllus* is native to North America; the Russell hybrids were developed in Yorkshire.

Conditions Neutral to acid soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest May to July (deadhead to prolong flowering). **TC**

RANUNCULUS ACRIS 'STEVENII'

This is a tall, semi-double version of our native field buttercup that works as an excellent border plant. It can reach 1.5m, so we grow ours through a pea-stick cage for support, making an impressive plant. After flowering, it is cut down to the ground, allowing space for late-summer planting. A vigorous perennial, forming dense clumps of rhizomes that should be divided every three to four years. It also works well planted in coarse, long grass or in hedge margins.

Height 1.5m.

Origin *R. acris* is native to Britain and Ireland, as well as most of northern and central Europe.

Conditions Most borders or meadows, prefers damp soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest May to July. **TC**



JASON INGRAM



JASON INGRAM

IMPATIENS *GOMPHOPHYLLA*

This unusual plant reminds me of tropical seahorses. A spectacular native of the southern highlands of Tanzania, where it grows in grassland. The flower is a beautiful mix of red, orange and yellow, putting on a display all summer. I sometimes take off some of the leaves to allow the flowers to become more visible. This is a tender, tuberous form that I plant out for the summer and bring into the tunnel for the winter. I have propagated it by putting cuttings in a glass of water for a few weeks until the roots appear.

Height 90cm-1.2m.

Origin Tanzania, East Africa.

Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3.

Season of interest June to September. **JB**



PONTECHIUM MACULATUM

This lovely echium relative behaves as a short-lived perennial or biennial and is extremely hardy. With handsome, pointed, greyish-green leaves and tall, striking, burgundy-red flower spikes, it makes an especially good contrast with circular allium flowers and with the arching and soft-textured grass *Stipa tenuissima*. Seed germination can be erratic, so be patient and prick the seedlings out as soon as they are big enough to handle, but don't throw the seed tray away as there may be more to follow. Seed is best sown in midsummer for flowering the following year.

Height 30cm.

Origin Central Europe to the Balkans.

Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.

Season of interest May to July. **TC**

THIS STUNNING, FUCHSIA-PINK WATERLILY WAS ONE OF THE HYBRIDS TO INSPIRE MONET

NYMPHAEA 'ROBINSONII'



NYMPHAEA 'ROBINSONII'

One of a collection bred by Joseph Bory Latour-Marliac, who crossed the native European white-flowered *Nymphaea alba* with colourful North American species. His hybrids were exhibited by the Seine under the newly unveiled Eiffel Tower in 1889 and inspired Monet's love of water lilies, as told in Caroline Holmes's book *Water Lilies and Bory Latour-Marliac*. The semi-vigorous *N.* 'Robinsonii' has fuchsia-pink flowers, a yellow anther and maroon-blotched pads. It was named in 1895 to honour Marliac's friendship with William Robinson, who created the garden at Gravetye.

Height 30cm.

Origin Marliac Nursery, France.

Conditions 40-60cm below the surface of the water; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-11.

Season of interest June to August. TC



SILENE BANKSIA 'HILL GROUNDS'

There was a time when I didn't use much pink in the garden, but this has changed in recent years. It has to be the brightest magenta flower available to grow. It is sterile, which explains why it flowers for so long – from May until August. It doesn't produce seed, but is very easy to propagate by basal cuttings in spring or division in autumn into pots. This is one of the key plants I use for bridging the gap from spring into summer, and combine it with *Geum* 'Totally Tangerine' for a riot of colour.

Height 75cm.

Origin Garden (species China, Korea, Russian Far East).

Conditions Good drainage; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest May to August. JB

ROSA X ODORATA 'MUTABILIS'

This has one of the longest flowering seasons of any rose, with single, lightly scented blooms produced almost continually from the start of summer until the hardest winter frosts arrive. 'Mutabilis' means changing and refers to the way the flowers open honey-yellow and mature to a cerise pink. They make quite a show, especially when underplanted with the pink and yellow lupins 'The Chatelaine' and 'Chandelier'. It will tolerate poor soils better than most roses and is quite resistant to disease. **AGM**.

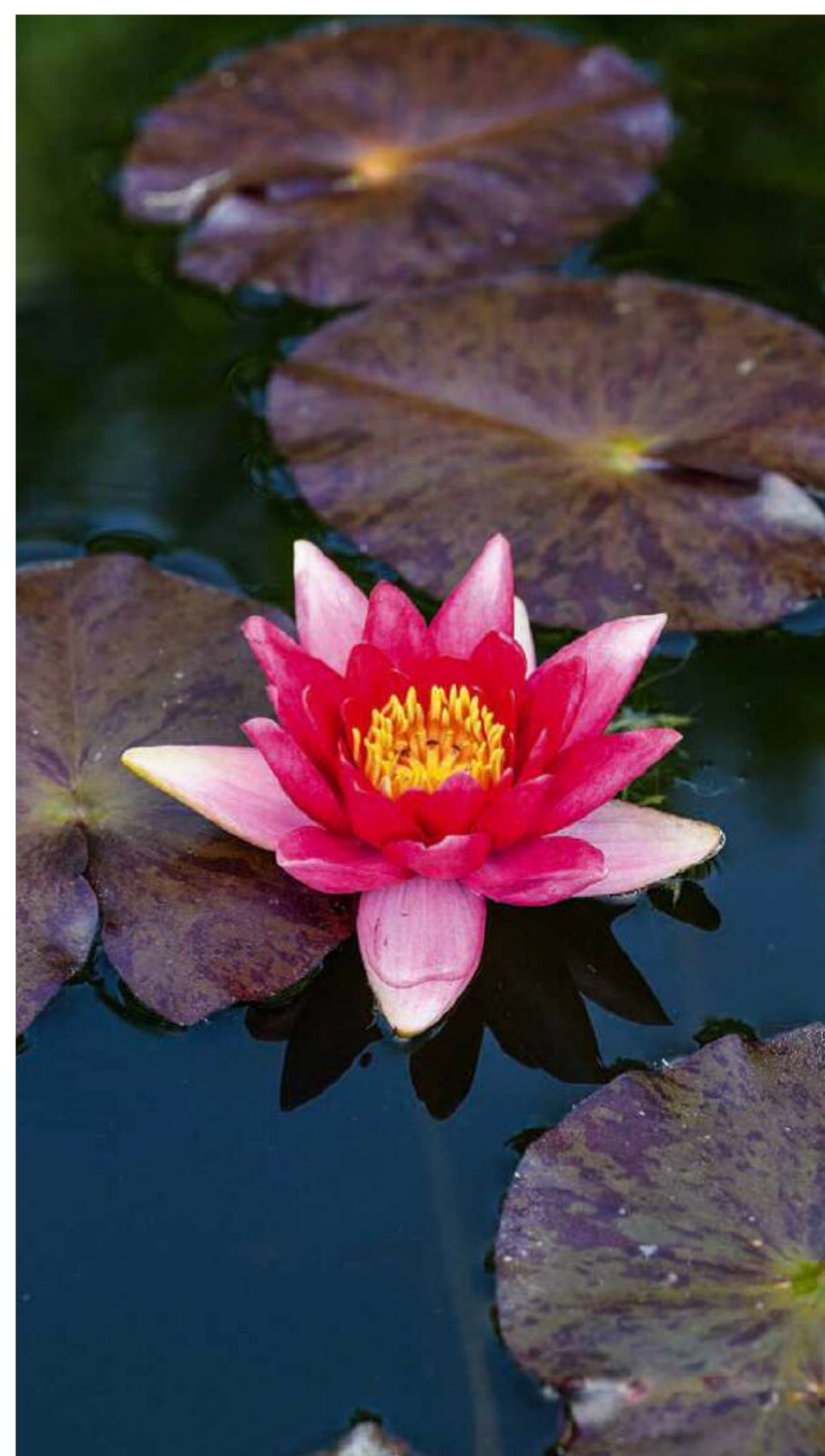
Height 1.5m.

Origin Hybrid of *R. chinensis* x *R. gigantea*.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun. Best in a sheltered spot to maximise its long flowering season.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest June to November. TC



FOR MANY WEEKS IN SUMMER THEY PRODUCE THEIR STARTLING, CONE-SHAPED FLOWERHEADS

ERYNGIUM X ZABELII

ASTRANTIA 'HADSPEN BEST'

In the 1990s we visited the legendary Hadspen nursery of Sandra and Nori Pope in Somerset and brought back a beautiful *Astrantia* 'Hadspen Blood', which was very happy in our clay soil and produced many seedlings over the years. This one is by far the best with large, black-red flowers and purple-black solid stems. I did worry that perhaps the last thing the world needed was another red astrantia, but this one is so lovely and flourishes for such a long time I couldn't really keep it, or its sister 'Hadspen Beauty', for myself.

Height 70cm.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Moist, but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Summer. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER



JASON INGRAM

ERYNGIUM X ZABELII

Eryngiums are more commonly known as sea hollies because of their prickly leaves and because the natural habitat of some species is in coastal areas. In a garden setting though, all they ask for is a sunny, well-drained spot, where for many weeks in summer, they will produce their startling, cone-shaped flowerheads surrounded by a ruff of vicious-looking bracts. There are several cultivars available of this hybrid, varying slightly in the intensity of the blue, both in the flowerheads and flower stems, but all are good. Easily propagated by root cuttings in late winter.

Height 60-90cm.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest Summer. **KW**

HOSTA 'HIRAO MAJESTY'

Beneath each flower are large, soft-pink bracts that look like stars piled up on dark stems and are so spectacular they can surprise even the most seasoned hosta lover. The lavender-coloured flowers appear in midsummer and stand out against a background of beautiful, large, bright-green leaves with wavy edges. It is a tetraploid hosta, meaning it has four sets of chromosomes rather than the typical two. Tetraploid hostas tend to have firmer leaves with clearer markings that are more resistant to damage from slugs and can withstand the sun much better than normal diploids.

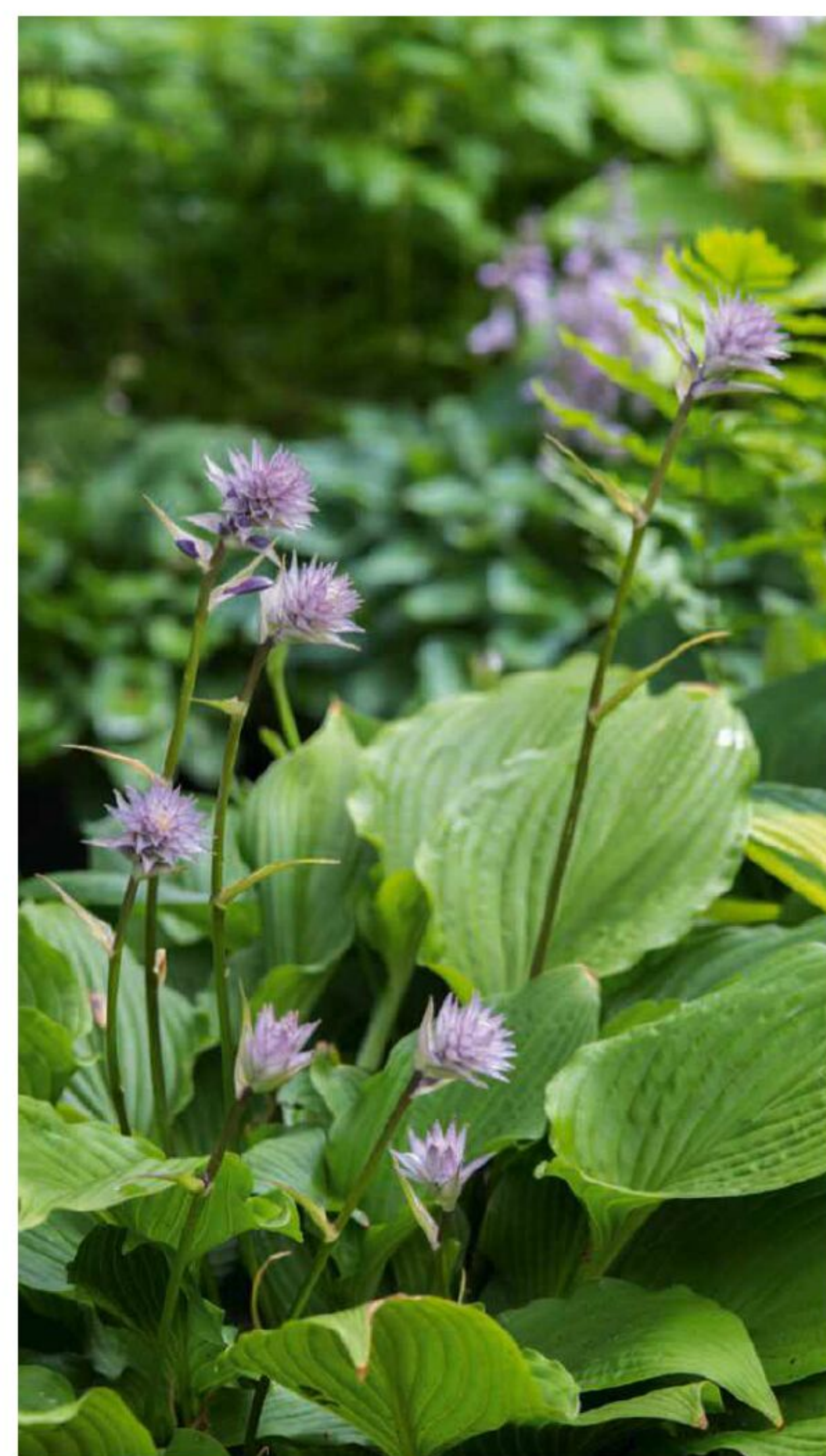
Height 70cm.

Origin Japan.

Conditions Well-drained soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Spring to summer. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER



JASON INGRAM

PAEONIA 'SCARLET O'HARA'

In his 1870 book *The Wild Garden*, William Robinson discussed the use of exotic perennials naturalised in long grass, and used the example of a group of scarlet peonies in a meadow. Reintroducing such naturalised plantings to Gravetye's meadows has been fun and some of the species peonies, such as *P. mascula* and *P. officinalis*, are showing promise, but 'Scarlet O'Hara' has worked best, with its brilliant-red, single flowers that stand out so well in the grass. It has the vigour to compete in the meadow habitat and continues to flower over the years. **AGM.**

Height 1m.

Origin *P. officinalis* x *P. lactiflora*, first produced in the USA in 1956.

Conditions Moist but well-drained loam or sand; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest June. **TC**

CAMPANULA 'KENT BELLE'

This plant impresses me on many levels; there's the sheer size of its blooms and the dark intensity of its midnight blue, bell-like flowers, and that's just for starters. As with most campanulas, 'Kent Belle' enjoys a fertile and moisture-retentive soil in summer, and for best results it also needs reasonable light levels. The weight of the clusters of flowers can become heavy for the plant, so support with a little birch or hazel to showcase the blooms to maximum effect. Reliably perennial and deserved of its Award of Garden Merit. **AGM.**

Height 1m.

Origin Hybrid of *C. takesimana* and *C. latifolia*.

Conditions Moist in summer, but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest June to July. **TB**



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CYNOGLOSSUM AMABILE

The Chinese forget-me-not, closely related to the common forget-me-not, is a wonderful annual with abundant, showy sprays of small, intense azure-blue flowers that stand out against its slightly grey-blue foliage. We get best results from an autumn germination, with plants overwintered in the cold frame and planted out in spring. Subsequent successional spring sowings also make good plants that will flower a little later. Very effective tucked into gaps within the mixed border as well as being stunning in large drifts. Its lovely blue always looks best in dappled shade. **AGM.**

Height 60cm.

Origin Bhutan, China, Nepal.

Conditions Moist but well-drained loam or sand; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest May to July. **TC**

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LATE SUMMER

This is the time for yellows, reds, oranges and purples, bringing vibrancy and drama to shimmering borders with long-flowering perennials and unusual exotics

HELENIUM 'SAHIN'S EARLY FLOWERER'

This helenium stands above all others for sheer flower power. It's incredibly long-flowering – from July all the way until autumn – beginning life with a strong red and burnt-orange display that elegantly fades to a paler orange and yellow colour as it senesces, with the chocolatey-brown centres persisting into winter. It has the vigour and strength to associate happily with other perennials, grasses and shrubs. **AGM.**

Height 1-1.5m.

Origin Garden (species North and Central America).

Conditions Reasonably fertile and well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Early summer to autumn. **TB**



DIASCIA PERSONATA

This upright, eye-catching plant is a bit of a misfit. Although it is covered for months with typical diascia flowers, they are of an untypical dusty mauve-pink colour that takes some by surprise. It was discovered in South Africa in 1988 by James Compton, Martyn Rix and John d'Arcy and introduced to European gardeners by Hopleys in Hertfordshire. Fortunately, it is quite hardy in our Dutch climate and it is just as easy to make cuttings from this plant as it is from the more common diascias. It also makes an excellent cut flower.

Height 70cm.

Origin South Africa.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest Summer to autumn. **FVZ**

A SHIFTING COLOUR PALETTE MAKES A MASS PLANTING OF THIS COSMOS EXTRA LIVELY

COSMOS BIPINNATUS 'RUBENZA'



MAAYKE DERIDDER

COSMOS BIPINNATUS 'RUBENZA'

This beautiful cosmos was bred by van Hemert & Co. Its velvety, dark, ruby-red colours dull to an old rose red over the flowering period and that shifting colour palette, displaying all these tonal variations, makes a mass planting of this cosmos extra lively. Its loose, natural structure makes it easy to combine with taller perennials, such as the moon carrot, *Seseli libanotis*, especially when used with a large clump of the blood-red grass *Imperata cylindrica* 'Rubra' in the foreground. **AGM.**

Height 90cm.

Origin Garden (Mexico).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3.

Season of interest Summer to autumn. **FVZ**

PENSTEMON 'RAVEN'

Among the plethora of penstemons at our disposal, this cultivar has stood the test of time, and rightly so. Tubular, dark-purple flowers appear throughout summer and into autumn, and the intense colour of the flowers means they contrast well with vibrant reds, such as *Echinacea* 'Tomato Soup' or *Achillea millefolium* 'Red Velvet'. If your garden is in something of a cold spot, strike semi-ripe wood cuttings and overwinter in a frost-free place to ensure successive garden performance for years to come. **AGM.**

Height 50cm-1m.

Origin Garden (species central South America).

Conditions Fertile, free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest Summer until first frosts. **TB**



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ALSTROEMERIA 'PANDORA'

Originally bred for the Dutch cut flower trade, this is an excellent addition to a cutting garden or border. I adore the rich-purple flowers that work with most colours, offering a sultry foil to other plants. Alstroemerias are incredibly generous flowerers. To ensure rapid regrowth, pull the stems rather than cut them. Alstroemerias will flower from early summer until the frosts but need a little protection with a bark mulch for their first winter. It's well worth seeking out this cultivar – I've grown it and been happy with it for years.

Height 1m.

Origin Garden (species South America).

Conditions Organically rich, free-draining soil; sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Early summer until first frosts. **TB**

AS THE PURPLE, FIREWORK-LIKE FLOWERS FADE, THEY LEAVE A GRACEFUL SEEDHEAD

LIMONIUM PLATYPHYLLUM

HYDRANGEA MACROPHYLLA 'LOVE YOU KISS'

There are several hydrangeas with a thin, red rim and disk-shaped inflorescences, but this is possibly the best. The rim gets its redness from an anthocyanin called myrtillin, which usually makes the flowers of hydrangeas pink in alkaline soils and blue in acid soils, but in this case the red remains fixed and becomes more intense when there is more light or when it is colder. Over time, the rim becomes less visible and eventually the flowers turn a beautiful green mixed with red. Both the young foliage and autumn leaves are coloured red.

Height 1.5m.

Origin Japan.

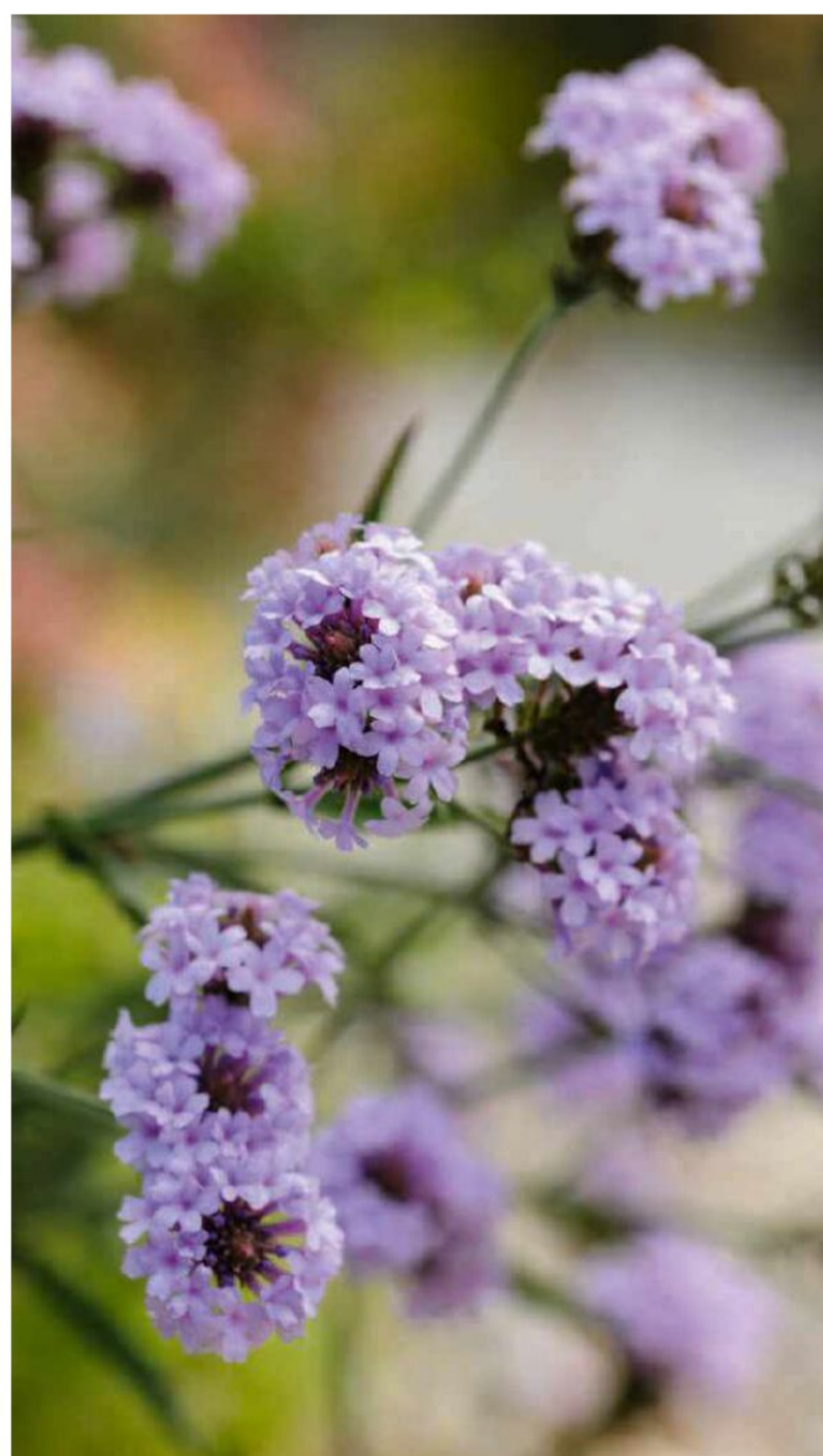
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest Spring to autumn. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER



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VERBENA RIGIDA F. *LILACINA* 'POLARIS'

Some plants are so reliable you can take them for granted and others so unpredictable it is always a joy to see them return each summer, a bit like the swallows in recent years. This low-growing verbena definitely comes into the second category. It is reputedly half-hardy, but whether it is the cold or wet conditions that make its winter dormancy debilitating, I do not know. Usually it returns and obliges by covering itself in insect friendly, small heads of a beautiful, soft purple that harmonise perfectly with so many other colours. **AGM.**

Height 45-60cm.

Origin Brazil, Argentina.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.

Season of interest Summer. **KW**

ORIGANUM 'KENT BEAUTY'

Although origanums are closely related to the herb marjoram, this is a purely ornamental low-growing plant for a sunny, well-drained site. The flowerheads strongly resemble miniature hop flowers and the floral bracts, which turn pink, last for months in summer, long after the actual flowers have faded. Both of its parents are native to the Mediterranean area so it is not a fan of wet conditions, especially during its winter dormancy. Cold hardy and happy in the open garden in drier areas, it is also content to grow in containers in wetter climates. **AGM.**

Height 15-20cm.

Origin Garden (species Mediterranean).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest Summer. **KW**



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NIGELLA PAPILLOSA 'DELFT BLUE'

Once you've tried growing *Nigella papillosa* cultivars you may not want to return to the more familiar *Nigella damascena*. The beauty of these plants lies both in their exaggerated flowers and their subsequent seedheads, which are simply stunning in their own right and look great in borders. The flowers are unusual with bicoloured blooms of white and deep blue on sturdy stems. Nigellas can be equally successful directly sown into a border or started off in modules and then planted out when the plants are large enough.

Height 50cm.

Origin Garden (species Spain, North Africa).

Conditions Reasonable soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 2a-11.

Season of interest June until August from a spring sowing. **TB**

DIERAMA PULCHERRIMUM

Wand flowers are one of my favourite perennials. With their wiry, evergreen, grassy leaves, many visitors ask us what the flowering grasses are. Dieramas are actually bulbs from South Africa, most of the species growing at altitude, which makes them hardy in most of the UK. This species flowers later than most, usually through July, with pink, purple, white, or in this case pale-amethyst, bells hanging beneath wiry flower stems. The silvery seedheads that follow are also attractive, moving in the slightest breeze.

Height 1-2m.

Origin South Africa.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3-4, USDA 8a-10b.

Season of interest Late summer for flowers. **KW**



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LIMONIUM PLATYPHYLLUM

Surely this is a plant that is due a garden revival soon? It baffles me why people don't grow it more often. *Limonium* is very tolerant of drier conditions and exposed sites, for those of us who struggle with such conditions. I first encountered the sea lavender many years ago, as a cut flower, and saw its potential to associate with a number of other garden plants. I use it among roses at the front of the border, where its purple, firework-like flowers shroud the bare bases of the roses. As its blooms fade, they leave a graceful seedhead.

Height 50cm-1m.

Origin Bulgaria east to Caucasus.

Conditions Free-draining soil, tolerant of chalk; sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

Season of interest July and August. **TB**

ADDS A DISTINCTIVE VERTICAL FEATURE TO THE BORDER WITH A TRANSLUCENT QUALITY

PENNISETUM MACROURUM



JASON INGRAM

ACHILLEA 'TERRACOTTA'

Achilleas offer tremendous value for money. This cultivar works incredibly well because as the flower buds open, they turn from an orange-bronze tone to apricot, then yellow through to cream before the flower is ultimately over. We are often encouraged to leave spent flowerheads for winter interest, but I would keep cutting until the end of summer as persistent deadheading will perpetuate the performance of this plant for the majority of the growing season.

Height 1-1.5m.

Origin Garden (species Europe and Asia).

Conditions Fertile but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

Season of interest Early summer until first frosts. **TB**

PATRINIA SCABIOSIFOLIA

As a general rule, the plants I like the most are those that exhibit a symmetry and beauty through the whole of their growing season. A beautiful flower is simply not enough, so I'm afraid a hybrid tea rose just doesn't cut it for me. But with this plant I'm happy to bend the rules slightly. Because despite the rather ordinary basal foliage – which you can't see in this image – this is a plant that has grace and form in spades. The flat heads of the small flowers are an insect magnet with their colour accentuated in the upper flower stems. In flower, it is slightly reminiscent of a yellow *Verbena bonariensis*.

Height 1-1.5m.

Origin China, Korea, Japan, Russian far east.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Summer. **KW**



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PENNISETUM MACROURUM

The African feather grass is a very attractive perennial from South Africa with mounds of fine, evergreen foliage and tall, waving stems sporting interesting bottlebrush-like flowers. It spreads slowly through stolons, but in some parts of the world, such as New Zealand, it is voracious and has become a noxious weed. Thankfully, it behaves itself in our UK climate, offering a distinctive vertical feature in the border with a translucent quality, adding special movement to any planting. It makes a very pretty element when run through dense groups of asters. **AGM.**

Height 1.5m.

Origin South Africa.

Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.

Season of interest Foliage all year round, flowers from July. **TC**

HEMEROCALLIS 'ARIADNE'

Daylilies have an army of devotees, and in conjunction with hostas, even have a society of their own (sometimes affectionately referred to as the Hems and Hos). They are very reliable summer-flowering perennials, but I wonder if, in part, their popularity is because they will readily produce new flower forms, patterns and colours when raised from seed. Interesting and lovely as these are, I prefer the simplicity, grace and charm of some of the older cultivars, such as 'Ariadne', which holds its scented flowers well above the foliage. Uncommon but worth searching for.

Height 1m in flower.

Origin Garden (species eastern Asia).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

Season of interest Summer. **KW**

A BEAUTIFUL DAHLIA WITH ENCHANTING, WHITE-LILAC, WATERLILY-TYPE BLOOMS

DAHLIA 'PORCELAIN'

DAHLIA 'PORCELAIN'

This beautiful dahlia is lilac in bud then opens to the most enchanting, white-lilac, waterlily-type flower. As it matures it opens with a yellow centre, at which point we deadhead it to prevent such an elegant flower looking drab. We lift dahlias and store over winter in a shed. Some may survive just fine in the ground, but by lifting we open space in the border for spring planting and secure plants against harsh weather. This one works best if forced in the greenhouse, around January. With enough warmth the plant will erupt into growth and basal cuttings can be harvested and rooted with bottom heat.

Height 1.5m.

Origin Garden (species Central America).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun in a sheltered position.

Hardiness RHS H3.

Season of interest July to November. **TC**



JASON INGRAM

BERKHEYA PURPUREA

This is an attractive, short-lived perennial from South Africa that has an unusual, thistle-like appearance. It works particularly well for us at the front of our long border where its big, circular, purple daisy flowers contrast beautifully with spikes of *Sisyrinchium* and *Libertia*. We generally have our best results from seed sown in autumn, which means that the plants can be grown on into 9cm pots before they are overwintered in a cold frame ahead of a spring planting. Once established, it is perfectly hardy for us, flourishing in a free-draining soil.

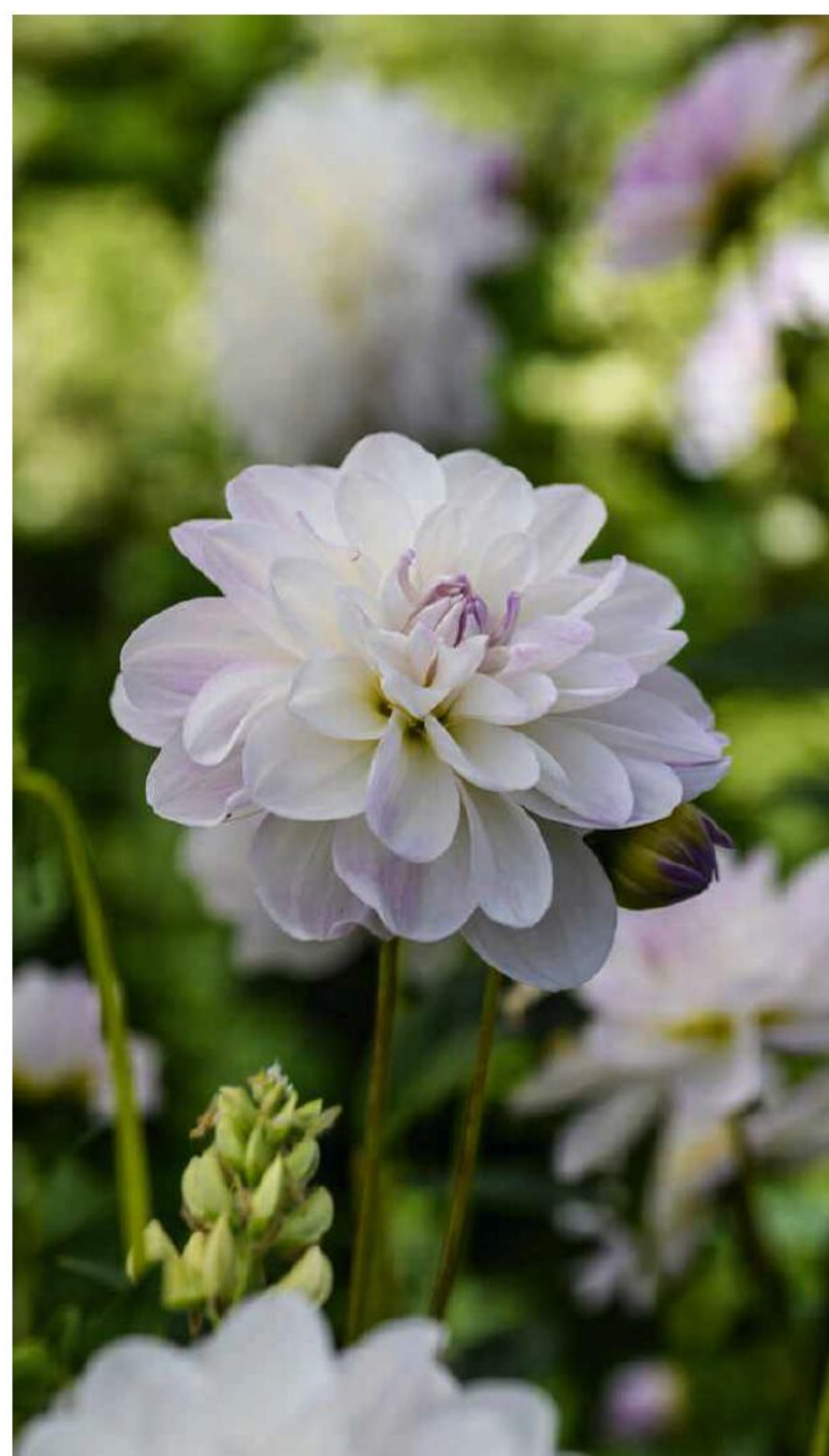
Height 50cm.

Origin Mountainous regions of South Africa.

Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest June to July. **TC**



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SALVIA 'AMISTAD'

A beautiful and incredibly floriferous salvia that will continue flowering until the first frosts. It survives the winter at Gravetye, although benefits from autumn mulching for a little extra protection. Its winter skeleton will offer some structure, although it usually dies back to the ground and should be cut back hard in early spring. We take cuttings between July and August, overwintering in a cool greenhouse, and find these make the best plants. After hardening off they can be planted as gaps open up. **AGM**.

Height 1.2m.

Origin Garden, hybrid of *Salvia guaranitica*.

Conditions Moist but well-drained chalk, loam, sand; full sun in a sheltered spot. Best plants are produced by overwintering cuttings under glass.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 9a-11.

Season of interest June to November. **TC**



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AGAPANTHUS INAPERTUS SUBSP. *HOLLANDII*

Agapanthus must be familiar to almost every gardener, and there are a bewildering number of species and cultivars available in varying shades of blue or white. I must admit I did catch the collecting bug and grow well over a 100 different types, varying not only in colour but in size (from 25cm to 1.5m) and in flower form. This subspecies is one of the most reliable, in the middle of the height range, with good strong stems carrying the semi-pendulous flowers of a good mid-blue. Summer without agapanthus just wouldn't be summer for me.

Height 90cm-1.2m.

Origin South Africa.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest Late summer. **KW**

ERIGERON ANNUUS

A lovely fleabane from North America that behaves like an annual or biennial, self-seeding freely through the garden and flowering from June until long into autumn. Its pure-white petals, or rays, always drop before they go brown, keeping the plant looking fresh throughout the year, and it is particularly good at night when the flowers have a wonderful hazy, floating quality. It is important to thin out self-seeded seedlings in spring, weeding out those that may be in the way and transplanting to better spots. Cut back by half in June to make compact, bushy specimens or it will need staking.

Height 1.5m.

Origin North America.

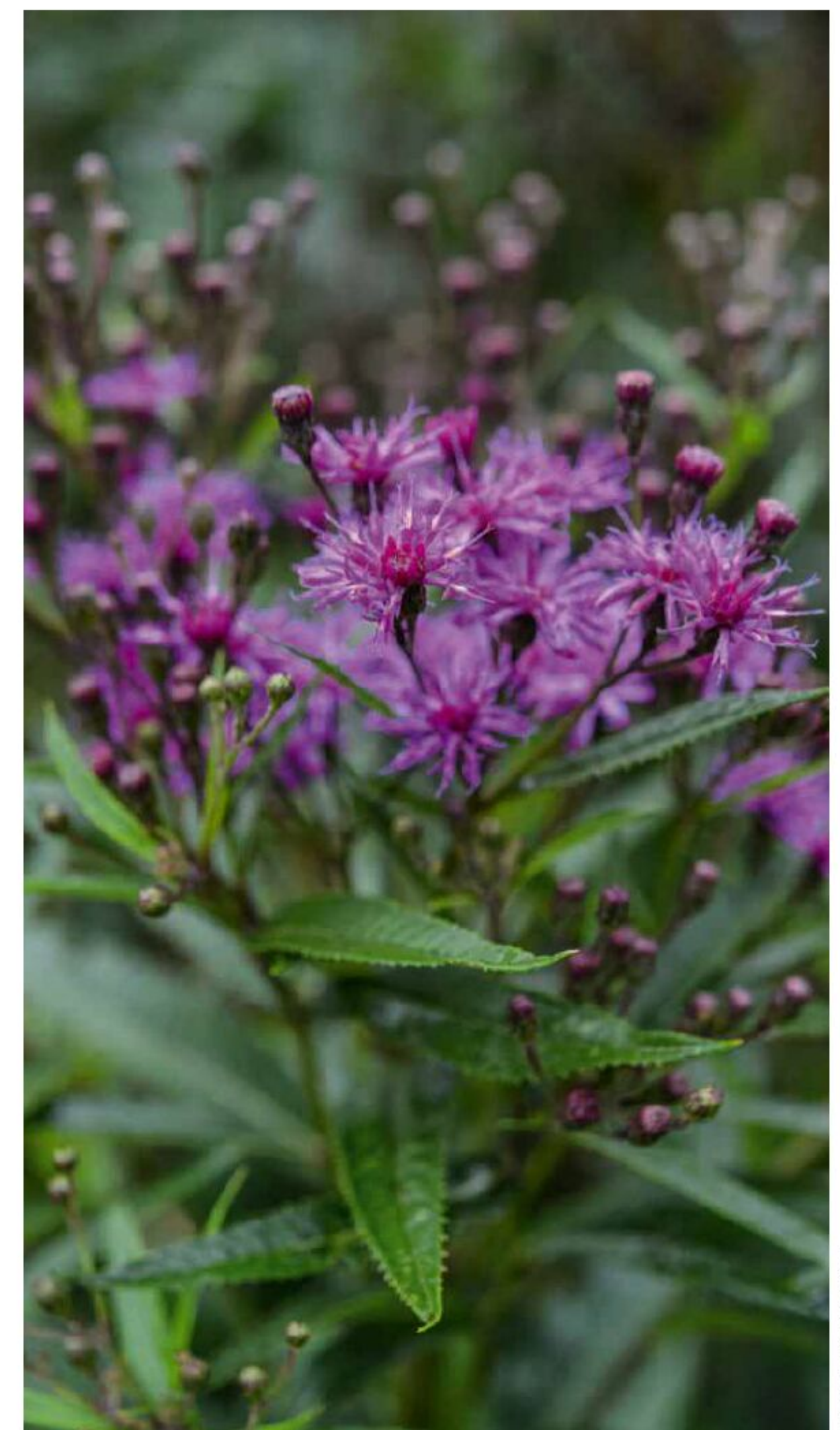
Conditions Light, well-drained soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest June to November. **TC**



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VERNONIA ARKANSANA 'MAMMUTH'

Tall border plants can be hard to get right. They need to provide that essential, back-of-the-border, top tier, while also offering prime flowering performance. Vernonias provide both. I've discovered them only recently, and was immediately entranced by these sophisticated and intriguing late-summer stars. With their dark-purple flowers, carried on tall, stately stems, they offer a late burst of colour to a border. **AGM.**

Height 1.5-2m.

Origin Garden (species northern and central USA).

Conditions Tolerant of most garden soils with good moisture retention during summer months; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Late summer through to autumn. **TB**



KNIPHOFIA 'GLADNESS'

This is one of the best kniphofias I grow as it has an abundance of flowers over a long period. Dark-apricot buds open to vibrant orange on sturdy, bronze stems, well above its neat foliage. I repeat it through one of my borders for its strong, coloured spires that lead the eye from one end of the border to the other. This kniphofia flowers in June and July and sometimes into August. If the foliage is scruffy in spring, I pull out last year's leaves to make space for the new growth. Propagate by division in spring.

Height 1-1.5m.

Origin Garden (species South Africa).

Conditions Moist and deep but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest June to July for flowers. **JB**

HIGHLY FLORIFEROUS, EASY ON THE EYE, AND GRACEFUL AND ELEGANT IN FLOWER

CROCOSMIA MASONIORUM 'ROWALLANE YELLOW'



MAAYKE DERIDDER

TAGETES 'CINNABAR'

Just as chefs have their signature dish, so nurserymen and women have their signature plant, and this single-flowered, warm-orange tagetes is ours. It has everything we could want in an annual plant. It has a beautiful, vivid colour and a natural appearance, it's easy to grow and to combine with perennials, has a long and abundant flowering period and works well in a pot. One of our trainees brought us the seed from Great Dixter, where this extremely beautiful form of *Tagetes patula* was originally known as 'Dixter Strain'.

Height 60cm.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Well-drained, fertile soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H2.

Season of interest Summer to autumn. **FVZ**

ROMNEYA COULTERI

Tall stems of glaucous foliage bear giant yellow-and-white poppy flowers with delicate, almost translucent, petals. These have a remarkable ability to remain in good condition for several days and have a delicate fragrance. It was initially collected by Dr Thomas Coulter in northern California in 1832, but it wasn't until 1877 that the first plants flowered at Ireland's National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin, near Dublin, where a young William Robinson would have been impressed by the plant. He introduced it to Gravetye in the 1880s and it remains a favourite here. **AGM**.

Height 2m.

Origin California.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun in a sheltered position.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 7a-11.

Season of interest July to August. **TC**



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CROCOSMIA MASONIORUM 'ROWALLANE YELLOW'

Of the many crocosmias I grow, this is the one I would be most lost without. I am clearly not alone in my affection for this plant as this is also one of the plants we are most asked about by visitors to our garden. Highly floriferous, it is both graceful and elegant in flower. It flowers for a very long time and also offers a good balance between leaf and flower. These are all attributes not always associated with many of the red cultivars with a similar flower shape and habit. It is easy to grow and equally easy on the eye. **AGM**.

Height 1.2m.

Origin Garden (species South Africa).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Summer. **KW**

AN ANTIQUE, COPPERY QUALITY TO ITS TONES REALLY MAKES IT STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

GLADIOLUS 'BIMBO'

EUCRYPHIA LUCIDA 'BALLERINA'

Eucryphia is another genus of useful summer-flowering small trees, nearly all with white flowers. *Eucryphia lucida* is normally an upright small tree with white flowers in its native Tasmania, but two pink-flowered forms were found growing wild there by Ken Gillanders, who named them 'Pink Cloud' and 'Ballerina'. I prefer the latter, which covers itself in scented flowers, prettily picotee-edged in pink, for most of the summer. Much admired, its upright habit, small evergreen foliage and overall dimensions make it suitable for gardens of almost any size. **AGM.**

Height 3-4m.

Origin Tasmania.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest Summer. **KW**



JASON INGRAM

DIGITALIS FERRUGINEA

This is the rusty foxglove that comes from the eastern Mediterranean area. Our own native foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*, is lovely in the wilder parts of gardens, but for me it is too bulky in leaf and short-lived for intensive mixed plantings. Not so the rusty foxglove, especially in gravel gardens or plantings trying to capture a semi-arid ambience, where its narrowly upright spires of flowers create metre-high accent points. It is short-lived and does self-seed, but the foliage of its seedlings is smaller, neater and more companion-friendly than our native foxglove. **AGM.**

Height 90cm-1.2m.

Origin Italy to South Caucasus.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Summer. **KW**

CANNA 'EREBUS'

There aren't many of these water cannas around and this cultivar of *Canna glauca* is one of the best in terms of reliable flowering performance. You can grow it in water margins or water-logged containers, submerging the roots throughout summer. But it is equally happy flowering in a fertile garden soil. Treat it like any other canna, by allowing the first frost to slightly blacken the foliage and then bring it into a frost-free place for winter. I have learned not to cut the foliage down until new growth emerges in spring. **AGM.**

Height 1-2m.

Origin Garden (species southern USA to tropical South America).

Conditions Poorly drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest July until the first frosts. **TB**



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GALTONIA CANDICANS

Galtonias are widely available, but, as with a number of summer-flowering bulbs, they're not used quite as often as they should be. I generally start these bulbs off in pots at the beginning of the year and plant out a strong specimen in spring. Spikes of tiered, bell-shaped, white flowers appear in summer and give a boost of colour and elegance to mixed borders and containers. Galtonias work well when planted in small clumps throughout a planting scheme to give an effortless and natural feel to the border. They're also great for containers. **AGM.**

Height 50cm-1m.

Origin South Africa.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil in growing period; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-10b.

Season of interest Late summer. **TB**

GLADIOLUS 'BIMBO'

If you enjoy the increasingly popular trend of combining creams, dusky pinks and apricot hues, then this summer corm will make a great addition to your planting schemes. There is an antique, coppery quality to its tones that really makes it stand out from the crowd. As with most gladioli, you should plant from April onwards, in clumps where the plants are to flower, and staggered planting will give a longer flowering period. To ensure perenniality, lift the corms after the first cold spell and store in a dry, frost-free place until the following growing season.

Height 1.5-2m.

Origin Garden (species South Africa).

Conditions Fertile, free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest Mid to late summer. **TB**



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DAHLIA 'MEXICAN STAR'

I imagine that on smelling the flowers of the chocolate cosmos, *Cosmos atrosanguineus*, for the first time, most people would be as intrigued as I was when I first encountered it. However, it isn't the most robust of plants to grow. This dahlia is reputedly an intergeneric hybrid with the chocolate cosmos and, if so, has certainly inherited much of its cosmos parent's chocolate scent. It is also much taller and easier to grow. It has attractive, purple-flushed foliage, and for me, is perfectly happy remaining in the garden over winter without protection.

Height 90cm-1.2m.

Origin Garden (species Mexico).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 8a-11.

Season of interest Summer to autumn. **KW**

A CLASSY PLANT WITH MAGENTA TO MULBERRY FLOWERS AND A STRONG PRESENCE

ZINNIA ELEGANS 'BENARY'S GIANT WINE'



JASON INGRAM

ZINNIA ELEGANS 'BENARY'S GIANT WINE'

I grew a number of taller-stemmed zinnias in 2017, and the ones that stood out head and shoulders above all the others were those from the wonderfully consistent Benary's range. They are available in a variety of colours, with one to suit almost every taste. This one from the Benary's Giant Series is a classy plant, with magenta to mulberry-coloured flowers. It is perfect grown as a cut flower, but will also have a strong presence in your borders until the first frosts.

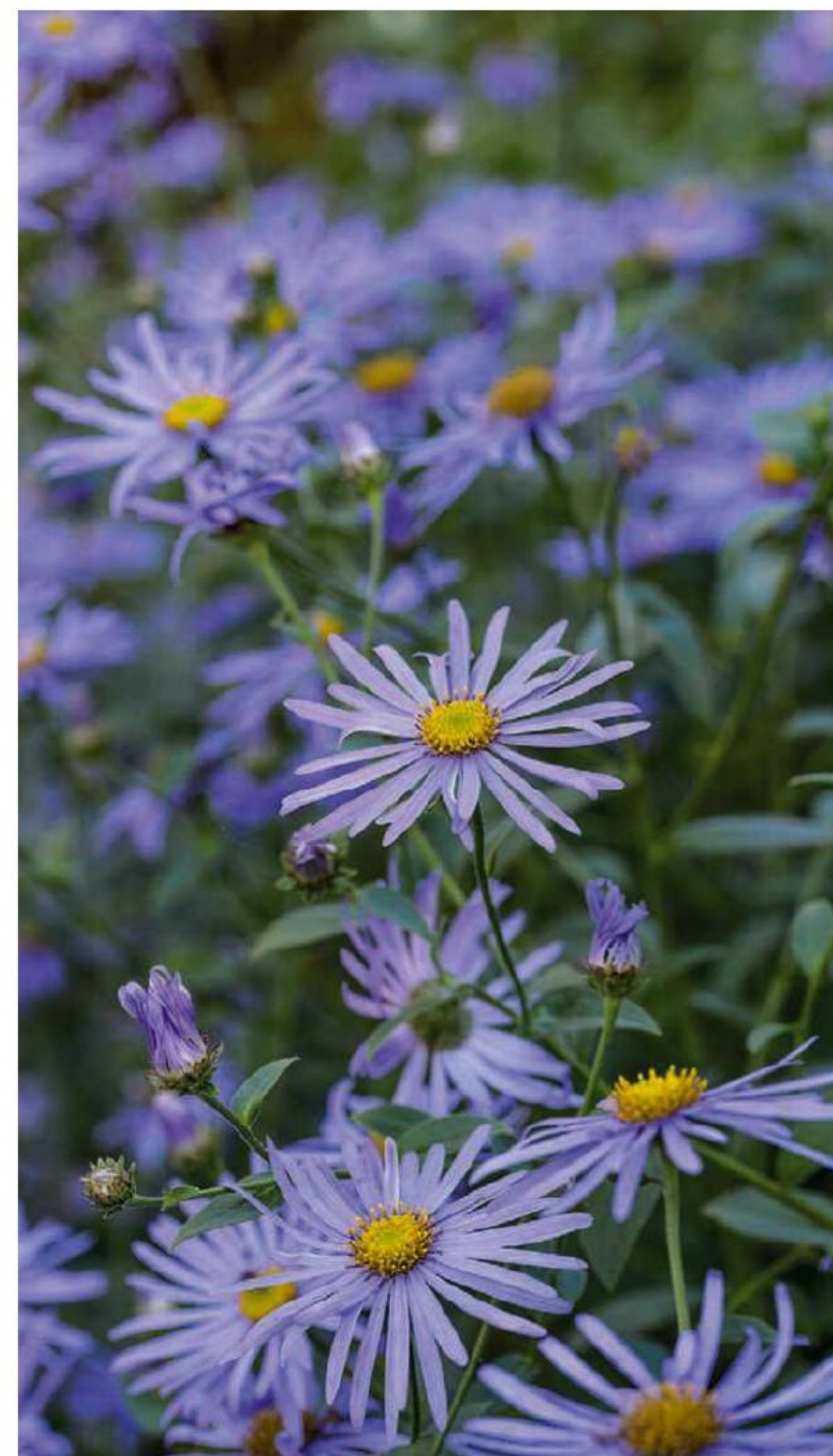
Height 50cm-1m.

Origin Garden (species Mexico).

Conditions Moist but well-drained, fertile soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

Season of interest Staggered sowing will produce flowers from July until the first frosts. **TB**



JASON INGRAM

VERBENA MACDOUGALII 'LAVENDER SPIRES'

This beautiful, vigorous and useful cultivar was selected by Marina Christopher at her nursery, Phoenix Perennials. It has a long flowering season from June until first frosts and makes a good structural plant through winter. Unlike its promiscuous relative, *Verbena bonariensis*, it is sterile, so doesn't self-seed, making it a more manageable border plant. It's easily propagated by cuttings rooted in a glass of water. We cut plants back by half in June to keep them in proportion and stop them from flopping.

Height 2m.

Origin Garden (species southwest USA and Mexico).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest July to November. **TC**



JASON INGRAM

ASTER X FRIKARTII 'MÖNCH'

Michaelmas daisies have always been popular, and breeders have produced many hundreds of different and exciting cultivars. There can be few, however, that have stood the test of time better than this one, bred by a Swiss nurseryman more than 100 years ago. With large flowers of a good lilac blue and central boss of yellow stamens, it is one of the first to flower in the late summer and remains in flower for many weeks – much longer than most other types. A wonderful mixing colour and still one of the very best. **AGM.**

Height 90cm-1.2m.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Any soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-10b.

Season of interest Summer to autumn. **KW**



MONARDA 'ON PARADE'

Monarda 'On Parade' was one of the winners of a trial I carried out at Hunting Brook and it is still a superior perennial in my main border for late colour. This is a Canadian selection of *M. didyma* that bulks up quickly and thrives on my rich, heavy clay soil. It has fuchsia-pink to magenta flowers, and the carmine-pink bracts under the flowers prolong its season of interest. Monardas often get mildew, generally because of drought, but this cultivar has always been mildew-resistant with me. I propagate by division in spring.

Height 1.2m.

Origin Garden (species North America).

Conditions Rich, heavy, clay soil that retains moisture; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest July to September for flowers. **JB**

THIS TALL, WHITE BURNET ADDS A WONDERFUL AIRY FEEL WHEN GROWN EN MASSE

SANGUISORBA CANADENSIS

EUCOMIS PALLIDIFLORA

Impressive and exotic, this bulbous plant from South Africa is the largest *Eucomis* in cultivation. Its flower torches alone measure up to 40cm and these sit atop sturdy stems of more than a metre with large, long leaves. The flowers are a modest green-white colour that can create a calm haven in the middle of a colourful border and combine beautifully with colourful echinaceas and grasses. On top of each flower is a small, green crest that looks like a pineapple; hence its common name of pineapple plant. A great plant for pots but needs winter protection. **AGM.**

Height 1.2m.

Origin South Africa.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3.

Season of interest Summer to autumn. **FVZ**



JASON INGRAM

ANEMONE DREAMING SWAN (= 'MACANE004')

Elizabeth MacGregor's *Anemone* Wild Swan (= 'Macane001') was the eye-catching RHS Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year in 2011, but we had problems growing it in our garden. This seedling of Wild Swan has the same large, beautiful, semi-double white flowers with a soft-lilac streak on the back of the petals, but is very healthy and vigorous. Like all of MacGregor's Swan series – which also includes Elfin Swan (= 'Macane017'), Dainty Swan ('Macane005') and Ruffled Swan ('Macane007') – it is not invasive and fits well into naturalistic plantings.

Height 60cm.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Summer. **FVZ**



MAAYEK DE RIDDER

CLEMATIS 'GRAVETYE BEAUTY'

This lovely *Clematis texensis* hybrid was raised by Francisque Morel on his nursery in Lyon in 1914. On his retirement he sent his collection to William Robinson at Gravetye, where his head gardener, Ernest Markham, continued Morel's work, giving rise to many great hybrids. This is a delicate clematis with seductively rich-red flowers, the texture of velvet. It benefits from a high-potash liquid feed every two weeks in summer. It often dies back to the ground in winter, but when it does keep any old wood, it can start flowering in June; otherwise it flowers in August.

Height 2.5m.

Origin Garden (species East Asia).

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 4a-8b.

Conditions Moist, fertile soil; roots in the shade and head in the sun.

Season of interest July to September. **TC**



MAAYEK DE RIDDER



JASON INGRAM

MUSA SIKKIMENSIS 'RED TIGER'

This dramatic *Musa* cultivar has spectacular green leaves with maroon variegation and is a key plant in my exotic borders in summer. I feed it with lots of farmyard manure when planting and with liquid seaweed throughout summer. I propagate *Musa* by seed in spring from seed soaked for at least 24 hours and placed on 30°C bottom heat until germination. I tried sowing seeds last autumn, and although they germinated, the seedlings died within a few weeks, so stick to spring sowing. I have propagated this particular *Musa* by division.

Height 2.5m.

Origin Garden (species Sikkim, India).

Conditions Rich, moisture-retentive soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H2.

Season of interest Summer. JB

IMPATIENS TINCTORIA

I debated for some time whether or not to include this plant as it doesn't really meet my criteria for what I consider a good habit. In the end, I couldn't resist those large, beautifully marked and very heavily scented flowers – and as a result I conveniently forgot its unremarkable foliage, which is worryingly similar to the Himalayan balsam that swamps so many river banks. Fortunately, despite appearances, there are no such problems with this species as I have never discovered a seedling offspring resulting from its projectile seedheads that are so beloved by children.

Height 1.5-2m.

Origin Uganda and Kenya.

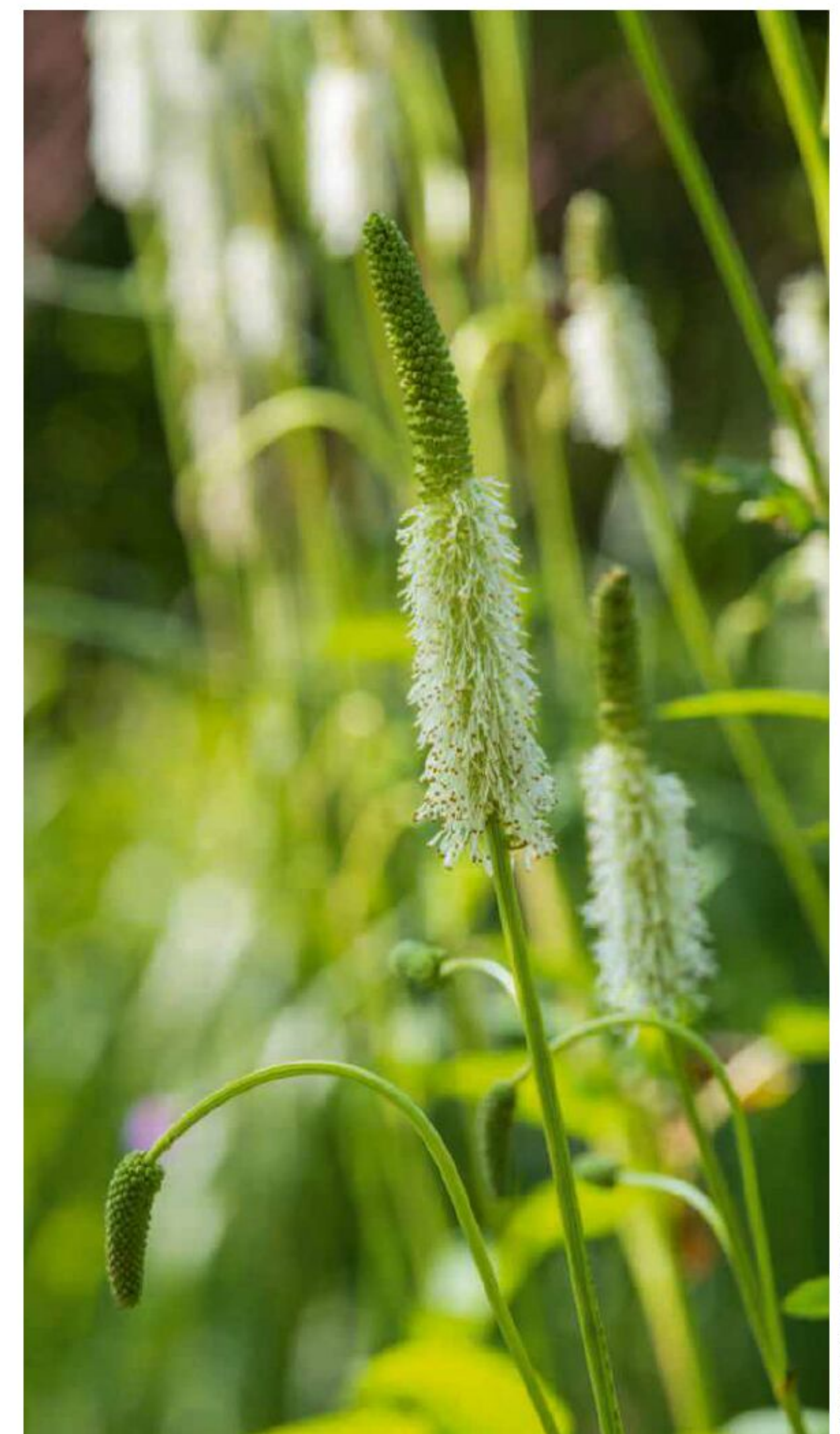
Conditions Moisture-retentive soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest Summer. KW



JASON INGRAM



MAAYEK DE RIDDER

SANGUISORBA CANADENSIS

Sanguisorba creates a wonderful feel of airiness and looseness in naturalistic plantings, and this tall, white burnet adds a wonderful airy feel, especially when grown en masse as the late-flowering spikes tend to appear one by one – and a mix of opened and unopened flowers looks fabulous. We grow it alongside the even taller, dark-red *Sanguisorba* 'Cangshan Cranberry', which we got from Graham Gough at Marchants Hardy Plants, the dark-pink *S. menziesii* and our own selection the red *S. officinalis* 'Rock and Roll'. A winning combination.

Height 1.5m.

Origin North America.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Summer to autumn. FVZ

SALVIA PATENS
'SPECIAL GIANT'

We got this wonderful salvia from Derry Watkins of Special Plants. It's a seedling she raised from *Salvia patens* 'Guanajuato' but it is hardier and has larger flowers. These enormous, yet delicate, pure-blue flowers appear from June until first frosts, and although it flowers best in full sun, this blue looks stunning in dappled shade, and we enjoy growing it in a pot, so we can move it around and show it off. In winter it dies back to a tuber and can be treated like a dahlia. We like to start it off early under glass to give the cuttings time to make good plants.

Height 1m.

Origin Garden (species Mexico).

Conditions Moist, fertile soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.

Season of interest July to October. TC

A BEAUTIFUL WILDFLOWER CREATING A VIOLET-BLUE MIST IN OUR MEADOWS

SUCCISA PRATENSIS



JASON INGRAM

SUCCISA PRATENSIS

This beautiful wildflower is found in meadows and hedgerows throughout the UK, preferring damper, clay soils. At Gravetye it is abundant, creating a violet-blue mist in our meadows at the end of the season, delaying the mowing until October. It is also a beautiful addition to borders and shrubberies, and makes an excellent combination in the wild garden with *Crocsmia x crocosmiiflora* 'Citronella'. Seed is best sown in autumn and planted out as plugs in spring, but it can also be sown direct.

Height 1m.

Origin British Isles, and western and central Europe.

Conditions Moisture-retentive soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest September to October. **TC**

DAHLIA MERCKII

A species dahlia from Mexico that is used in the breeding of most of the garden hybrids we grow today. It has a dainty habit and flowers abundantly all summer, with pretty, nodding flowers ranging from almost white to pink, lilac and magenta. It is easy to grow from seed, flowering in the first year from an early spring sowing. A single packet will give a good range of colour and the best forms can be kept to grow on and propagated by dividing the tubers or taking cuttings. It is also fun to collect seed from plants that may have hybridised with the other dahlias in the garden to see what pops up.

Height 1.5m.

Origin Mexico.

Conditions Fertile soil; full sun and shelter.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.

Season of interest July to October. **TC**



JASON INGRAM



JASON INGRAM

SYMPHYOTRICHUM 'LITTLE CARLOW'

Some *Symphyotrichum* can be difficult to harmonise with other perennials and shrubs in naturalistic plantings, but this robust, much-admired cultivar, with its sprays of soft-blue, yellow-centred, daisy-like flowers that appear in abundance in late summer, provides an elegant charm in a number of garden situations, making it one of my favourite plants. I'd recommend a little birch or hazel to support the plant when it's in full bloom as the sheer weight of the flowers can overwhelm the wiry stems. **AGM.**

Height 50cm-1m.

Origin Garden (species North America).

Conditions Moist, fertile, free-draining soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

Season of interest August to September. **TC**

LONG, PROMINENT, RED STAMENS GIVE AN EXTRA LAYER OF FASCINATION

HEDYCHIUM 'TARA'

LIGULARIA DENTATA 'DESDEMONA'

Thirty years ago, as pastel colours swept interior design, sophisticated gardeners tended to shun orange flowers. I've never been sophisticated and have always loved orange, especially when, as here, it's combined with handsome, rounded, rich-purple foliage, especially in spring. While flowering, this perennial's foliage is grey-purple and dark red beneath, with purple stems. It demands a cool, even moist, spot or else a deep mulch, and most summers it will flag and droop its leaves during hot spells, quickly recovering as temperatures drop overnight.

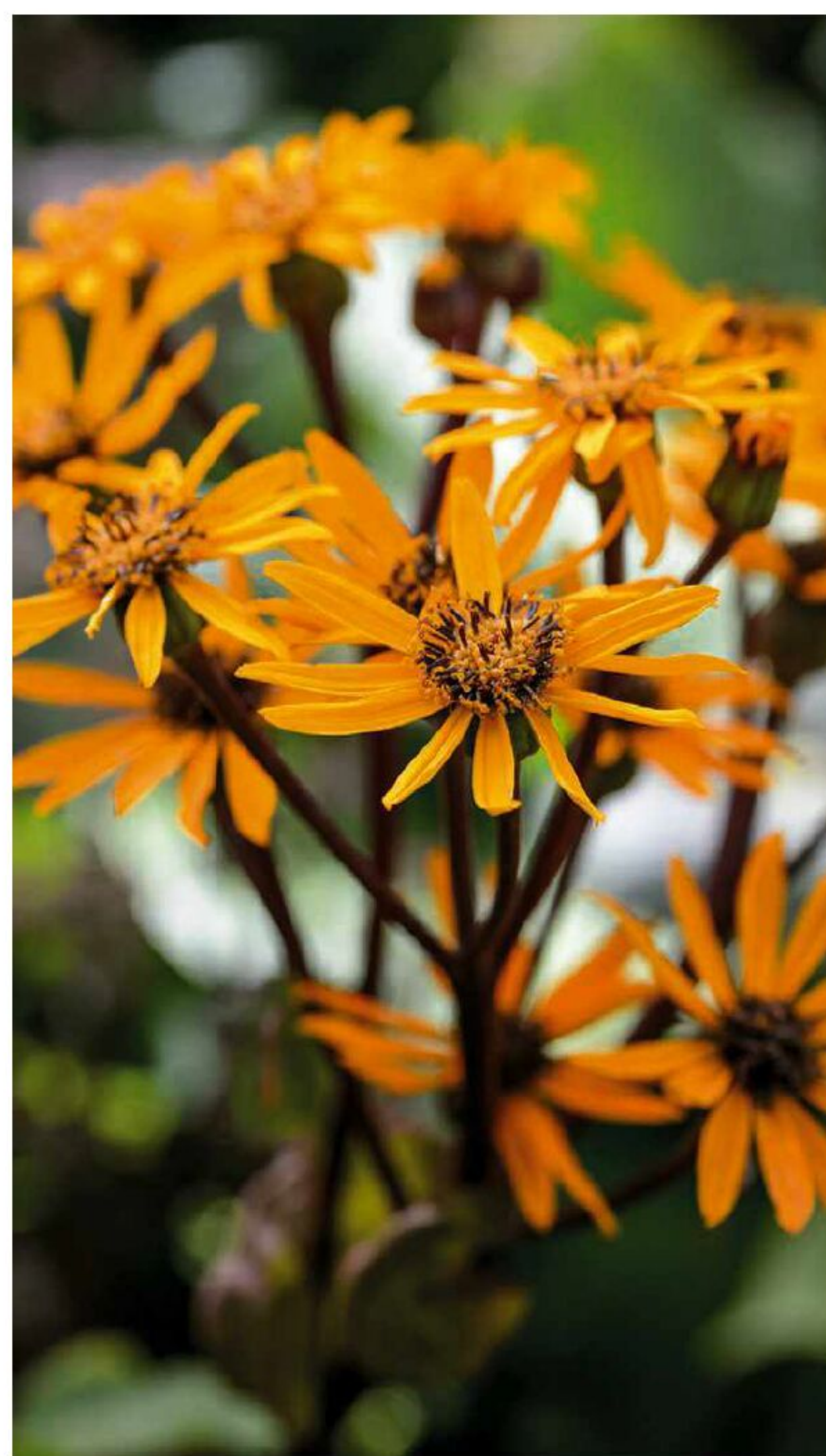
Height 40-60cm.

Origin Garden (species China, Japan).

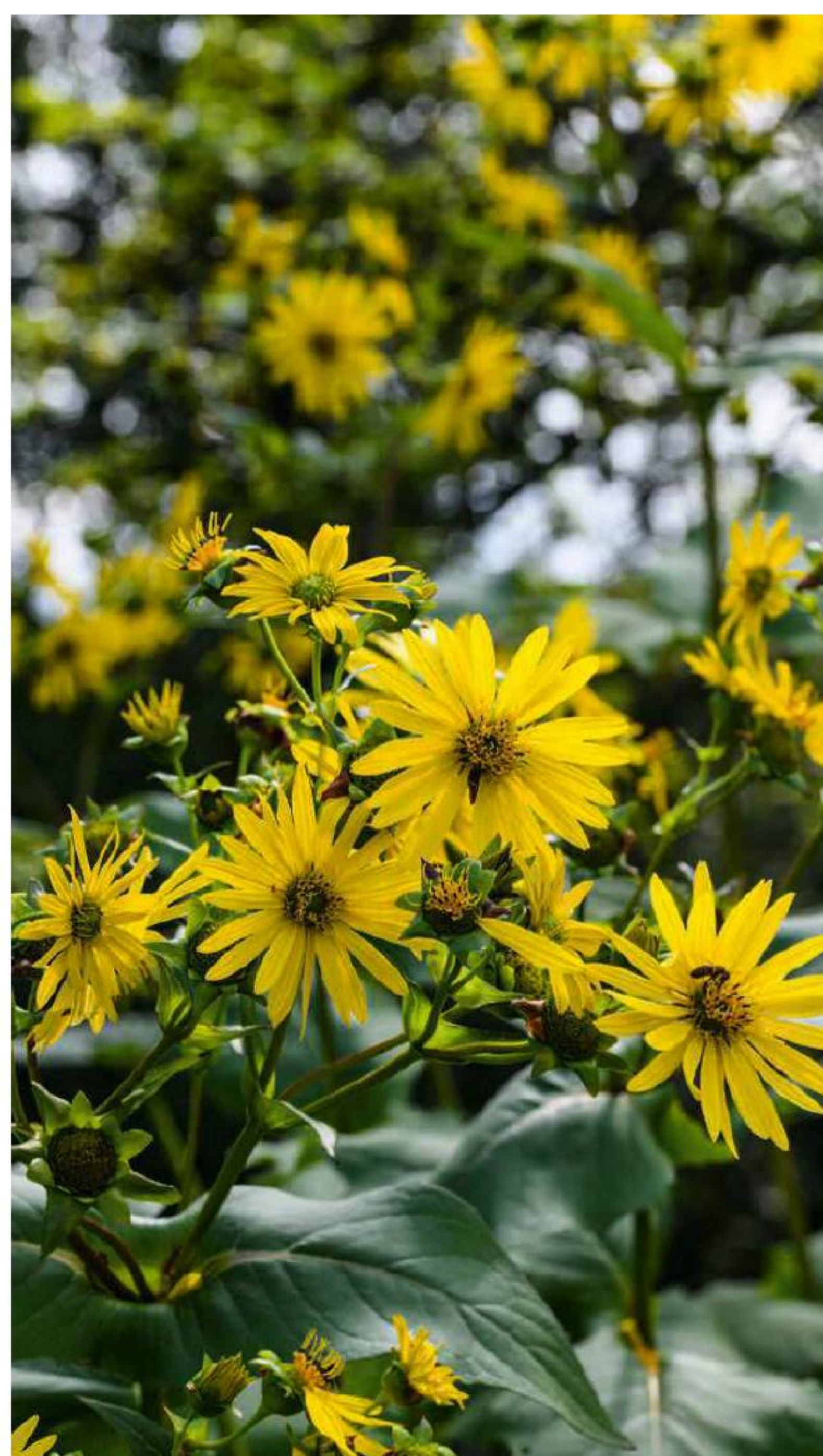
Conditions Moisture-retentive soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

Season of interest Summer. KW



JASON INGRAM



JASON INGRAM

SILPHIUM PERFOLIATUM

A vigorous, dramatic perennial with bright-yellow daisies on long, graceful stems that appear to perforate its pairs of broad, dock-like leaves. It has a long flowering season and is effective at the back of the border where it needs to be divided regularly to keep it in check. It also performs well in the meadow at Gravetye, planted under some old apple trees among *Helianthus* 'Lemon Queen'. This makes a spectacular show at the end of the season, after the rest of the meadows have been cut and the apples are ripening. **AGM.**

Height 2.5m.

Origin North America.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade, but tolerant of most situations.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

Season of interest August to September. TC

STIPA GIGANTEA

The giant oat grass is far from uncommon but it surely has to be one of the most eye-catching large grasses found in UK gardens. Plant it somewhere where the summer evening sun can reach it, and you will introduce a magical quality in that golden light of a lowering sun. Preferring full sun, the narrowly arching leaves grow 60-90cm high, topped by a wide fountain of flowering stems reaching up to two metres. It can self-seed, and seedlings can disappoint, so best buy a named cultivar, such as the taller (at 2.5m) *Stipa gigantea* 'Gold Fontaene' or the shorter *S. gigantea* 'Pixie' and *S. gigantea* 'Goldilocks'. **AGM.**

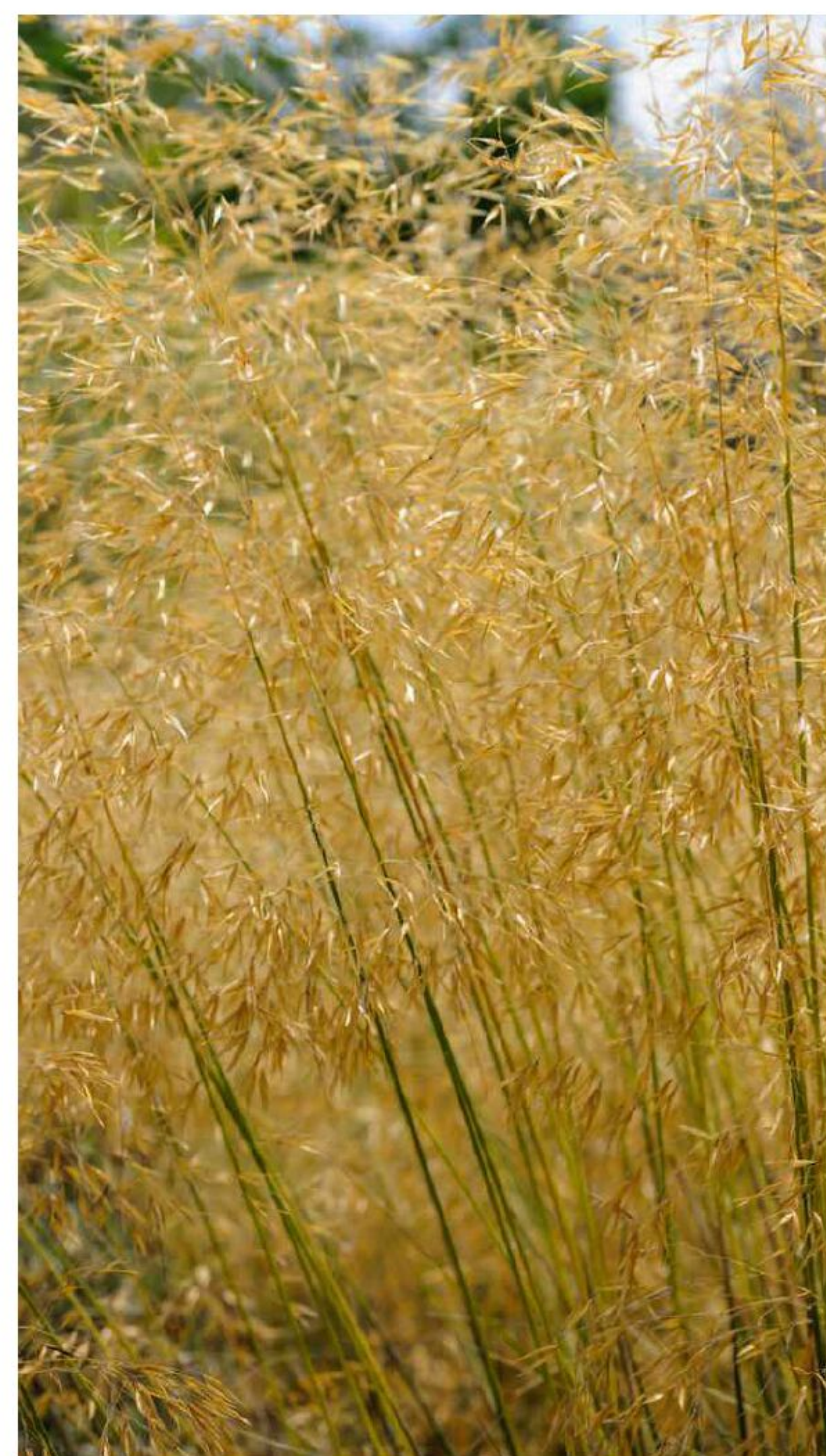
Height 1.5-2m.

Origin Iberia and Morocco.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-10b.

Season of interest Summer. KW



JASON INGRAM



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ACTAEA CORDIFOLIA 'BLICKFANG'

I first saw this *Actaea* growing in the stock beds in a field at De Hessenhof nursery in the Netherlands. I brought a few plants back to Hunting Brook where they have grown into large clumps; it is now one of my absolute favourite perennials. Its foliage is neat, with buds starting green and opening up to ivory-green over at least six weeks. I have it planted with purple fennel and a mixture of tropical foliage plants, which creates a spectacular display for the late summer and early autumn. I propagate it by division in spring.

Height 2.4m.

Origin Garden (species North America).

Conditions Rich, moisture-retentive soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest July to September. **JB**

HEDYCHIUM 'TARA'

This is one of the most reliable, hardy ginger lilies, with dramatic, strap-like, blue-green leaves that appear in June, followed by large, dense racemes of fragrant, exotic-looking, rich-orange flowers. The long, prominent, red stamen that emerges from each flower gives this magnificent inflorescence an extra layer of fascination. Although it is hardy here at Gravetye, it is best planted in a sheltered, well-drained spot and given a generous mulch in autumn to protect the crown from cold weather. **AGM.**

Height 2m.

Origin Southeast Asia.

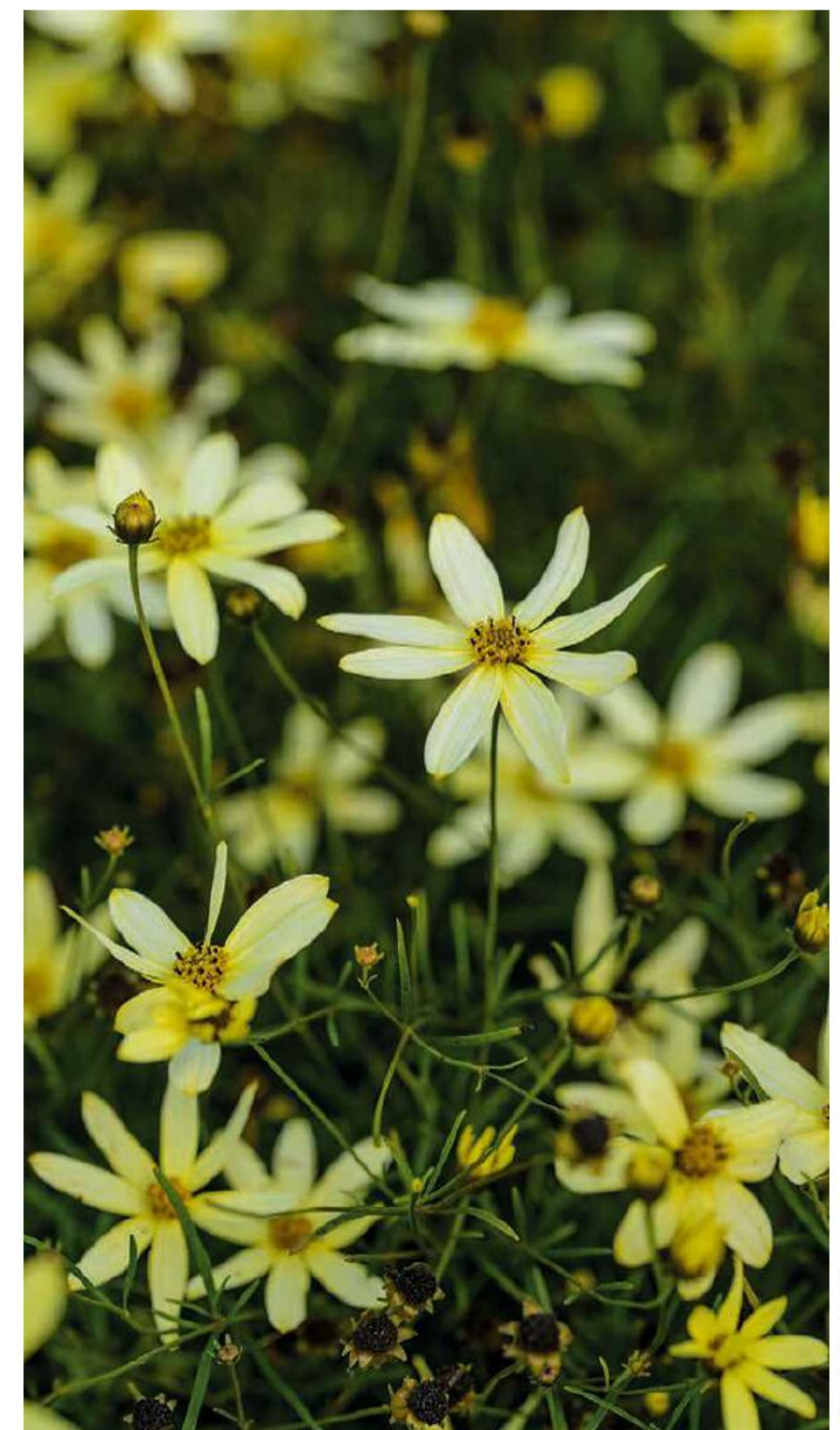
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun, in a sheltered spot.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest Foliage June to November; flowers September to October. **TC**



JASON INGRAM



JASON INGRAM

COREOPSIS VERTICILLATA 'MOONBEAM'

Coreopsis, sometimes called tickseeds, certainly tick all my boxes for what constitutes a good perennial plant. Easy, with thread-like foliage, making dense clumps that need no staking and squeeze out most weeds, then covering themselves with masses of yellow-orange flowers for many weeks. This is my favourite, with pale lemon-yellow flowers above more compact, yet still weed-resisting, clumps of dark-green leaves. Flowering in high summer and into autumn, it is the perfect companion for low-growing grasses and smaller agapanthus cultivars.

Height 60cm.

Origin Southeastern USA.

Conditions Any soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

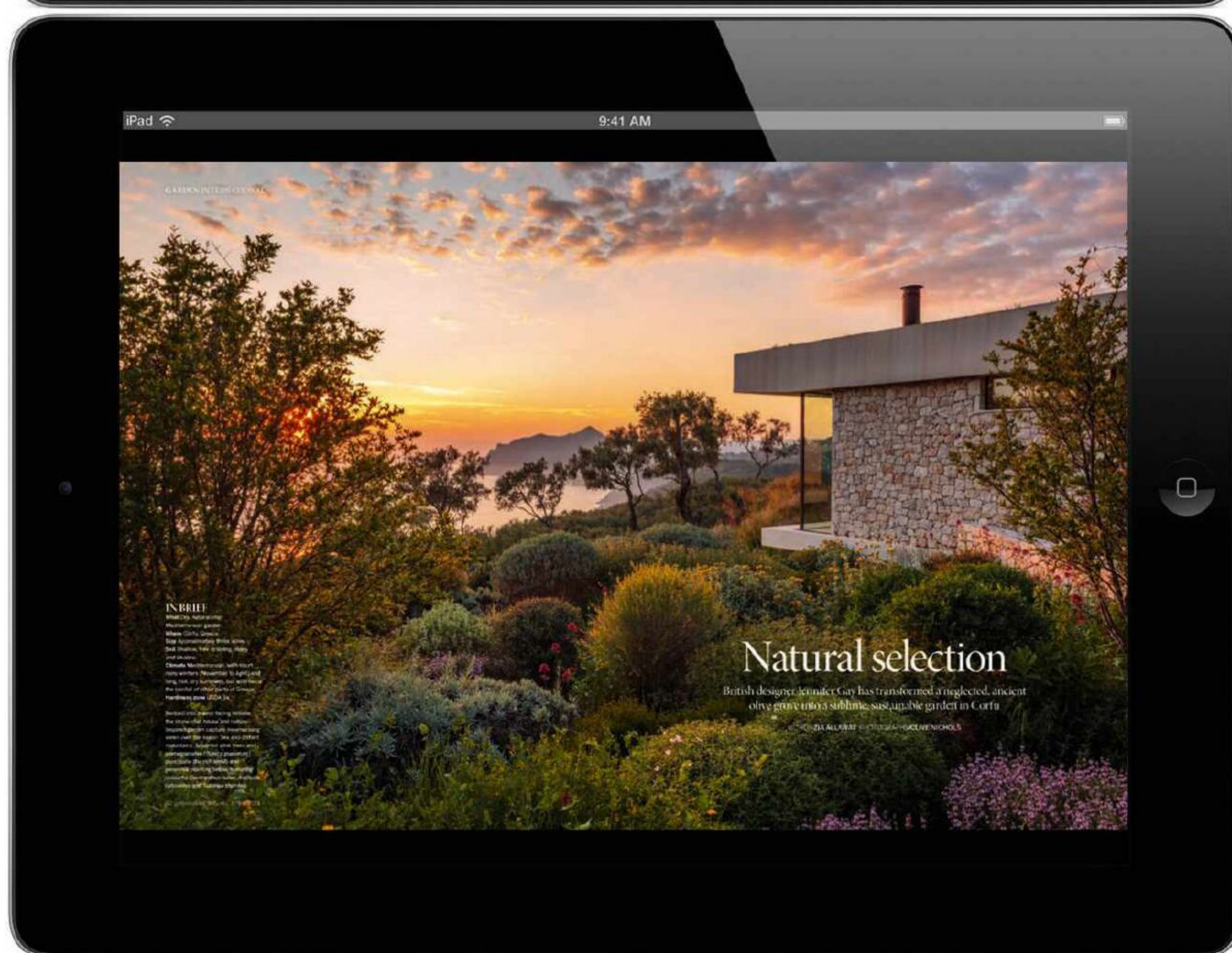
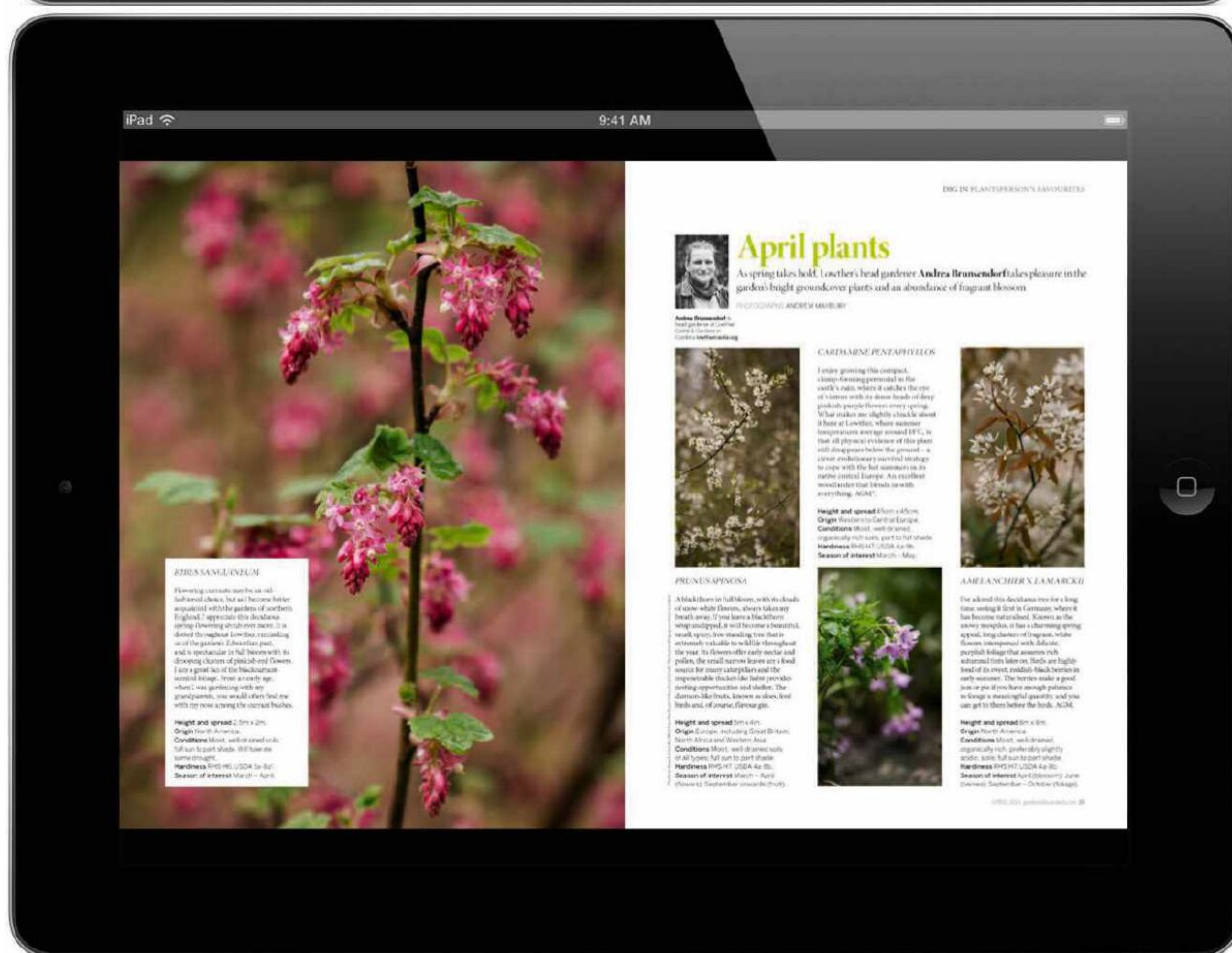
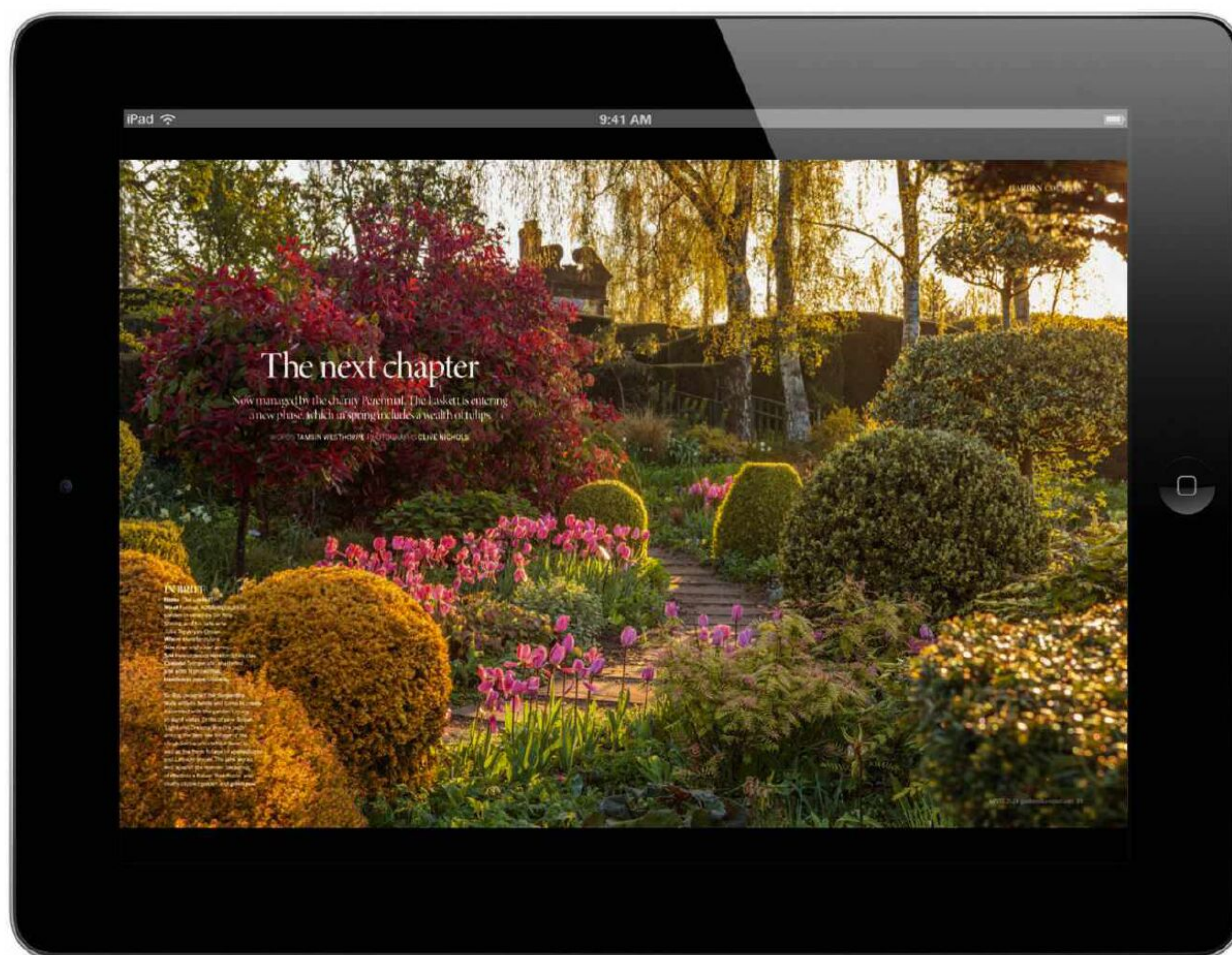
Season of interest Late summer to autumn. **KW**

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AUTUMN

In a season synonymous with shortening days, and with fewer flowering plants to hand, you can still make an impact with luminous late-season perennials, foliage plants and berries

LIQUIDAMBAR STYRACIFLUA

The highlight of autumn is, of course, the stunning colours before the trees drop their leaves. There are many wonderful plants to select for this moment, but my top choice has to be the sweet gum. It is sometimes confused with a maple tree but easily distinguished by its alternate leaves (maples are always opposite). The one we have at Gravetye consistently gives us the longest autumn display of any tree. There are many named selections, but the straight species is the best I have seen, and is easily propagated by layering.

Height 12-18m.

Origin Eastern USA.

Conditions Slightly acid soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest October to December for autumn colour. **TC**

*SYMPHYOTRICHUM
LATERIFLORUM* VAR.
HORIZONTALIS

I fell in love with this on my first trip to Great Dixter. On a misty morning, the sight of it used as a low hedge, with a backdrop of topiary and late-season perennials, was a revelation. Profuse white flowers with pink centres make a stunning show, but its structure of horizontal, branching stems is possibly its greatest asset. These look good throughout winter and should be cut down to the ground at the start of spring. **AGM.**

Height 1m.

Origin Eastern and central North America.

Conditions Most garden soils; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest September to February. **TC**

THIS GIANT OF A PLANT MAKES A WONDERFUL SCULPTURAL STATEMENT

ARALIA CACHEMIRICA



JASON INGRAM

DAHLIA 'KARMA CHOC'

Dahlias in the Karma series are much admired by flower arrangers for their long stems. This is perhaps the most opulent, with rich-maroon flowers and bronze foliage – and it smells of chocolate. Avoid the trap of planting too many dark flowers together, and keep them as an accent to avoid losing their impact. With most dahlias, ensure that the plant has a good framework of sturdy stems by enriching the soil prior to planting. A weekly tomato feed from mid-June will go a long way to giving you great results. **AGM.**

Height 1.5-2m.

Origin Garden (species Mexico and Central America).

Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest July until first frosts. **TB**

X AMARINE TUBERGENII BELLADIVA SERIES

Amarines give a high-summer-like display towards the tail end of the season, as the colder nights creep in. Bred as a hybrid between *Amaryllis* and *Nerine*, amarines combine the flamboyancy of autumn-flowering amaryllis with the delicacy and robust nature of nerines. With its trumpet-shaped blooms in shades of pink, this is a bulb best suited to a sunny location with little competition to cast shade over it while it grows. It is also a bulb for which drainage is key, so if you garden on a heavy soil, I would suggest growing them in containers.

Height 50cm.

Origin Garden (species South Africa).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

Season of interest Autumn. **TB**



JASON INGRAM



MAAYKE DERIDDER

ARALIA CACHEMIRICA

Also known as the Kashmir spikenard, this giant of a plant makes a wonderful sculptural statement. In summer it produces large clusters of cream-green, rounded umbels that can illuminate the shadiest of spots. Then in autumn its brown-black berries give it a slight air of mystery. Most bizarrely, it dies completely above the ground and rises in full glory the following season. Other species in the genus – *Aralia californica* and *A. continentalis* – are similarly voluminous, while *A. racemosa* and *A. cordata* remain much smaller.

Height 2.5m.

Origin Asia, from Afghanistan to Nepal.

Growing conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to full shade.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest Summer to autumn. **FVZ**

BUDS START OFF GREEN THEN OPEN TO A GORGEOUS APRICOT MIXED WITH SOFT YELLOW

KNIPHOFIA THOMSONII 'KICHOCHEO'

ROSA 'GERANIUM'

A hybrid of *R. moyesii*, which Gravetye's creator William Robinson described in 1894 as 'the most startlingly beautiful wild rose that has come to us for many years'. It continues to be one of best species roses available, and works well in a border or against a wall. Best of all is its large, pear-shaped hips that colour bright red and remain deep into winter. Flower colour is variable within the species, from soft pink to red, but this hybrid, raised at Wisley in 1938, has excellent orangey-red coloured flowers and is slightly more compact. **AGM.**

Height 2m.

Origin Garden (western China and Tibet).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

Season of interest August to February for hips; June for flowers. **TC**



JASON INGRAM



CHARLES HAWES / GAP PHOTOS

KNIPHOFIA THOMSONII 'KICHOCHEO'

John Grimshaw, director of Yorkshire Arboretum, raised a batch of Kenyan kniphofias from seed and selected the best from those that germinated. 'Kichocho' (Swahili for poker) was one of those seedlings. It was selected and named for its hardiness, ability to bulk up and its beautiful flowers. The flower buds start off green then open to the most gorgeous apricot mixed with soft yellow. At Hunting Brook, it flowers constantly from August into November. I propagate it by division in springtime as it starts into growth. I originally bought this from Cotswold Garden Flowers in the UK.

Height 90cm.

Origin Kenya.

Conditions Well-drained sun; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest July to November. **JB**

ALSTROEMERIA INDIAN SUMMER (= 'TESRONTO')

Striking, funnel-shaped, copper-orange blooms make this an excellent cut flower – but pull rather than cut the stems to encourage its generous nature. The bronze foliage also makes it useful as a foil among other shrubs and perennials. Foliage colour is best achieved by siting it in a sun-drenched position, but it needs moist, fertile soil to achieve the best display. Experience has taught me to mulch the plants well during their first winter to insulate the roots and ensure perenniality.

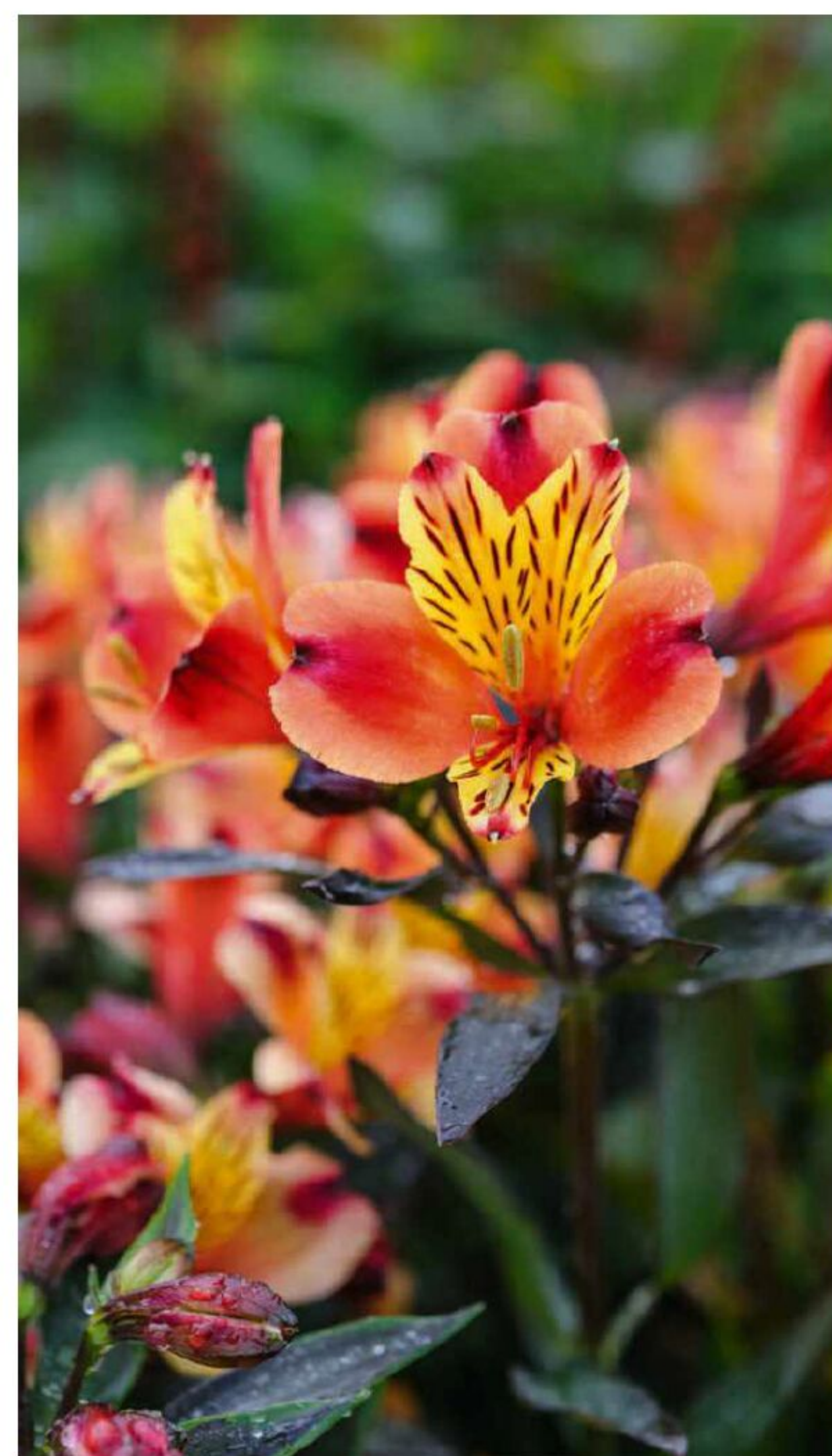
Height 1.5m.

Origin Garden (species South America).

Conditions Fertile, free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Early summer until the first frosts. **TB**



JASON INGRAM



JASON INGRAM

MALUS X ROBUSTA 'RED SENTINEL'

If you're still searching for the perfect tree for a small garden then it's worth considering a crab apple. They tick a lot of boxes, not least because they offer a long period of interest. 'Red Sentinel' blooms incredibly well in April and May, with a tremendous show of white flowers that are blushed pink. Then, from September, bauble-like, shiny, red fruits are produced in abundance all over the tree's canopy. To my amazement, in a wildlife-filled garden, the fruits persist on the branches until Christmas. **AGM.**

Height 4-8m.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Fruits September and October. **TB**

LEONOTIS LEONURUS

Known as lion's ear, this tender perennial produces whorls of bright-orange flowers at the end of summer, adding an exotic flavour to container plantings and borders. It can be shy to flower when planted in a border, and is best in a container where roots can be restricted and fed with potash to encourage a strong flowering performance. As an insurance policy, I would suggest taking cuttings and overwintering in a frost-free place, although in a sheltered garden you may be fortunate enough to get it through to the following year.

Height 2m.

Origin Southern Africa.

Conditions Will grow well in most free-draining soils; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H2, USDA 8a-11.

Season of interest Late summer through to early autumn. **TB**



JASON INGRAM



JASON INGRAM

CAMELLIA SASANQUA 'NARUMIGATA'

I love a plant that stands out from the crowd and this autumn-flowering species does that. Originating from Japan, sasanqua camellias require a more sheltered position than spring-flowering species, but if you have an ericaceous soil they are well worth a try. I find the elegant, pure-white, single flowers of this cultivar particularly attractive at this time of year. During October, and then sporadically throughout the winter months, they help to light up shaded and protected positions beneath the canopy of a tree. **AGM.**

Height 2.5-4m.

Origin Garden (species Japan).

Conditions Fertile, moisture-retentive, and well-drained ericaceous soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

Season of interest Autumn and winter. **TB**

OF ANY FRUIT TREE THE MEDLAR'S AUTUMN COLOUR IS PERHAPS THE BEST

MESPILUS GERMANICA 'NOTTINGHAM'



JASON INGRAM

MESPILUS GERMANICA 'NOTTINGHAM'

Medlars are among the most attractive and underrated fruit trees and are a good choice for a small garden. This particularly good-flavoured form has a slightly scruffy, yet charming habit, with large, very attractive blossom in spring. Medlar's autumn colour is perhaps the best of any fruit tree and the rosehip-like fruits are ornamental in their own right; they should be picked as soon as they start to ripen then left in the fruit bowl for a few days to 'blet', which will result in a sweet and juicy fruit to be enjoyed raw or turned into a delicious jelly. **AGM.**

Height 4m.

Origin Garden (species Iran, Iraq, Black Sea coast).

Conditions Fertile soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Year round. **TC**

CROCUS SPECIOSUS 'ALBUS'

The shorter days and early autumn rains are the time when autumn-flowering crocuses choose to flower. They are less flamboyant than their spring cousins and in my experience, rather less easy to please and flower well, but this pristine white cultivar of one of the easiest species is a winner on all fronts. It will happily grow and flower well in thin grass, where admittedly it is safer from hungry rodents, but I prefer to see it emerging from the ground unhindered by neighbours of any sort, where its classic simplicity can best be appreciated. **AGM.**

Height 15-20cm.

Origin Garden (species Bulgaria, South Caucasus, Turkey).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

Season of interest Autumn. **KW**



JASON INGRAM



MAAYKE DE RIDDER

HELIANTHUS 'TRIOMPHE DE GAND'

In the Netherlands annual sunflowers are very much in vogue. However, there are also several perennial helianthus that are worth looking at, including this lovely cultivar developed in Ghent in Belgium. Its large, double, lemon-yellow flowers are around 15cm in diameter and have a heart of dark, slightly ochre-coloured, disc-shaped florets. If you regularly remove the spent flowers, it will continue to bring a sunny, golden glow to the garden until late in autumn.

Height 1.8m.

Origin Garden (species North America).

Growing conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Late summer to autumn. **FVZ**

BORINDA ANGUSTISSIMA

I am building up a collection of bamboos at Hunting Brook. This graceful, arching specimen has narrow leaves, and stands out as one of the very best in my collection. It is very tall and non-invasive with an extremely narrow base, which makes it suitable for growing in most garden spaces. It also looks fabulous grown in large containers. New canes sometimes have a purplish look with white dust on them. Propagation is by division but is very difficult because of the way the canes grow together tightly at the base.

Height 4m.

Origin Sichuan Province, China.

Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest July to October. **JB**

THE INTRICATE TOAD LILY IS AN EXQUISITE, EXOTIC-LOOKING ADDITION TO THE BORDER

TRICYRTIS FORMOSANA STOLONIFERA GROUP

SALVIA 'WAVERLY'

The purple-and-white tones of this attractive salvia sit really well as the garden begins to wind down for winter. The gentle and somewhat soothing colouration of the flowers works very well with the unfolding autumn colours and textures. Salvias come into their own in our gardens in late summer, but like many, this one dislikes a frost. If you want it in your garden again next year, strike cuttings, protect them from frost, and make sure they get plenty of light until the end of May when they can be safely planted out into borders or containers.

Height 1m.

Origin Garden (species Mexico, tropical Americas).

Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.

Season of interest Midsummer until the frosts. **TB**



JASON INGRAM

SAXIFRAGA 'RUBRIFOLIA'

A hardy saxifrage that is great for partially shaded borders or containers. In early autumn, masses of frothy, white flowers, the lower petals elongated, stand on rose-pink stems above the bronze foliage, which has provided interest for most of late spring and summer. Ideal for the front of a shady border that has good fertility and drainage. To achieve the ideal growing conditions for this saxifrage, aim to replicate a deciduous woodland floor, with rich, open and crumbly leafmould. **AGM**.

Height 10-50cm.

Origin Garden (hybrid of *Saxifraga fortunei* from China, Japan, Korea).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest Late summer until autumn. **TB**

GERANIUM 'PINK PENNY'

This geranium was bred by Marco van Noort in the Netherlands, who also introduced *Geranium* Rozanne (= 'Gerwat'). This *Geranium* 'Pink Penny' flowers for me from June until November non-stop. Its foliage forms a mound with mauve-pink flowers with a pale eye and dark veins. I have it repeated through one of my borders as an underplanting to *Heptapleurum macrophyllum* combined with *Stachys byzantina* 'Big Ears' and *Tanacetum niveum*. I propagate by basal cuttings taken from the new growth in April.

Height 45cm.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Humus-rich, well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest June to November. **JB**



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FUCHSIA MAGELLANICA
VAR. *MOLINAE* 'ALBA'

It is difficult to resist the allure of this beautiful plant, which seems to flower non-stop all summer and still have enough in reserve to continue flowering even as the first frosts touch the ground. With its small, lance-shaped, soft-green leaves and slender, white flowers lightly flushed pink or mauve, it is a wonderfully elegant specimen. It is neither rare nor difficult to grow, so is usually overlooked by those for whom these things seem important, but I love it for its simple species charm and ultra-reliability. **AGM.**

Height 90cm-1.2m.

Origin Garden (species Argentina, Chile).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-10b.

Season of interest All summer into autumn. **KW**

TRICYRTIS FORMOSANA
STOLONIFERA GROUP

With its intricate, detailed flowers, the toad lily is an exquisite and exotic-looking addition to a border. Although reliably perennial, I have found it migrates towards the front of the border where drainage is at its best. Although fertility and moisture are key in summer, for best results try to position this plant where there is sharp drainage in winter. The real trick is placement as it comes into flower when many other plants in a border are drawing to a close. It works well grouped with *Hydrangea paniculata* and ferns.

Height 1m.

Origin Taiwan, southern Japan.

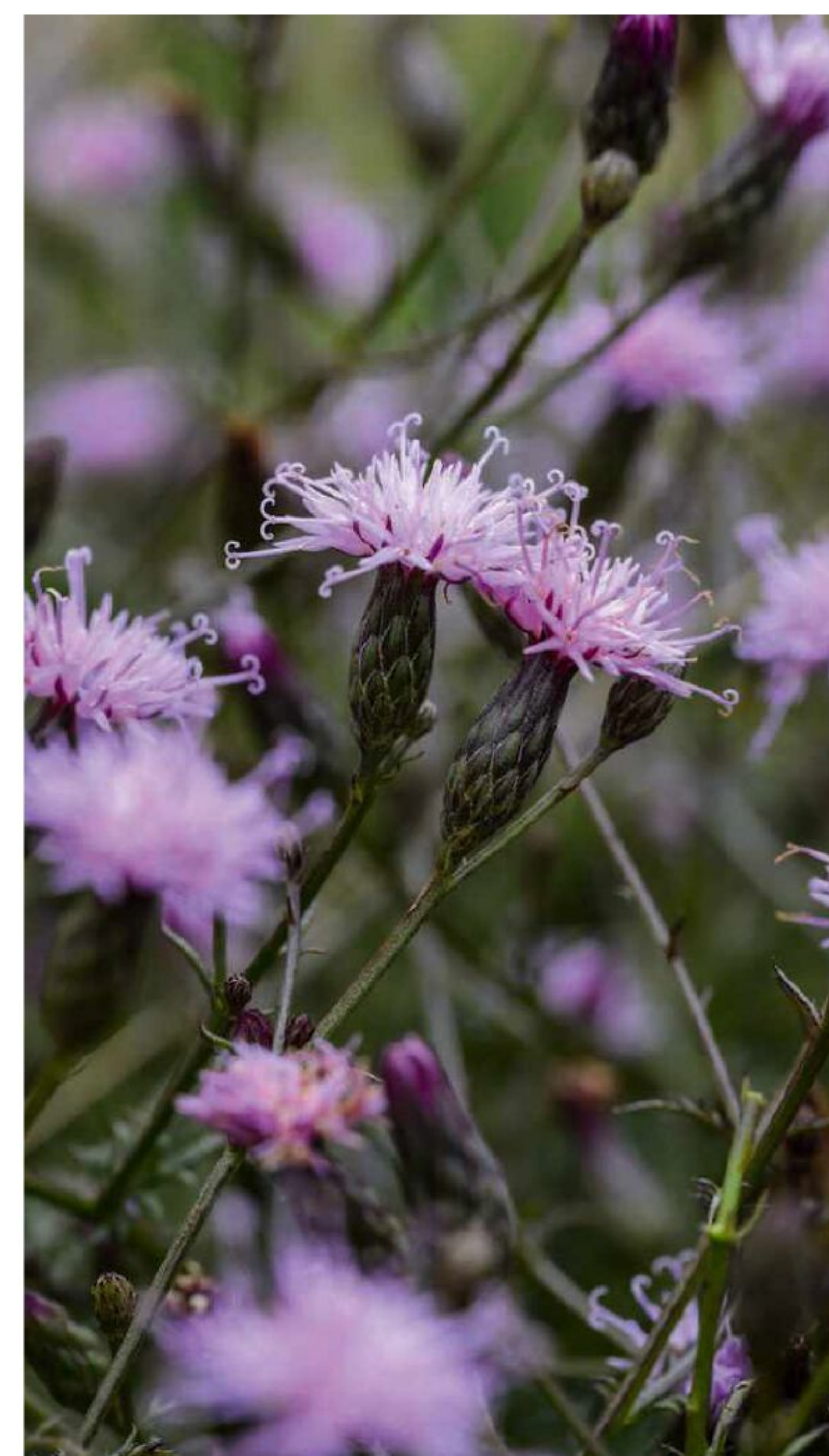
Conditions Moist, free-draining soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.

Season of interest Early autumn. **TB**



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SERRATULA TINCTORIA
VAR. *SEOANEI*

A plant of quiet charm is often nurseryman-speak for hardly worth growing. Not so in this case. Making a neat, almost impenetrable clump of dark-green, finely dissected leaves, it becomes covered in masses of small, lavender-pink pincushion flowers in autumn. Resist the temptation to remove spent flowers, as after they have dried out through the following months, these dried flowerheads develop into lovely golden-buff-coloured seedheads– a welcome treat at the end of winter.

Height 30-40cm.

Origin Northern Portugal, Spain, and southwest France.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest Autumn for flowers. **KW**

SORBUS
PSEUDOHUPEHENSIS
'PINK PAGODA'

Its beautiful, feathered, blue-green leaves have a greyish underside, and in autumn turn a glorious rich red. In spring it is covered in white flowers, which grow in pyramidal clusters, and are followed by dark-pink berries. Unlike other rowan berries, these pretty pink ones aren't loved by birds, so the display continues until the following spring. It's a small tree that is easy to grow and is able to withstand extremes of heat, cold, strong winds and drought. **AGM.**

Height 8m.

Origin Garden (species China).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Autumn. **FVZ**

THE FOLIAGE IS STUNNING, COVERED IN SILVER SPOTS THAT MERGE IN THE LEAF MARGINS

BEGONIA 'LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY'



JASON INGRAM

BEGONIA 'LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY'

This is a tough, reliable and showy begonia that was hybridised by Martin Johnson in California in the late 1970s. A rhizomatous plant with erect stems, the foliage is stunning, covered in silver spots that merge in the leaf margins, and pretty, pink flowers at the end of summer and into autumn. Can be hardy in mild parts of the UK in well-drained soil, but we lift ours when the first frosts start, and store in the glasshouse. It also makes a nice houseplant through winter. **AGM.**

Height 1m.

Origin Garden (species South, Central America).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. Best in a shady, sheltered spot or grown as a pot plant.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 10a-11.

Season of interest Year round. **TC**



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CHRYSANTHEMUM 'RUBY MOUND'

In my horticultural innocence as a young man, I assumed all chrysanthemums to be tender, greenhouse plants that were grown as a cut-flower crop. It was a pleasant surprise to discover there are some that are very happy to grow and survive out in the open garden. Among those we subsequently grew, this cultivar remains one of my favourites. Cut sprays to enjoy inside if the weather is cold outside, as it does make a wonderful cut flower. However, it only scores five out of ten for reliability and longevity as it is not a fan of long, wet winters. **AGM.**

Height 80-90cm.

Origin Garden (species East Asia).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Autumn. **KW**



JASON INGRAM

ABUTILON *MEGAPOTAMICUM* 'WAKEHURST'

When I saw this cultivar in the new Exotic Garden at RHS Wisley I was impressed by the colour it displayed on a bright, sunny, October day. Its large, bicoloured, bell-shaped flowers appear throughout summer but increase as the season progresses. It can be grown as a free-standing shrub or against a sun-baked wall – both situations needing shelter from the extreme winter. I strike cuttings in summer and overwinter in a frost-free place as an insurance policy.

Height 2m.

Origin Garden (species Brazil).

Conditions Reasonably moist but free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3.

Season of interest Midsummer through to late autumn. **TB**

UMBEL-LIKE SEEDHEADS FOLLOW DELICATE SPRAYS OF WHITE AUTUMN FLOWERS

ANGELICA 'LOUSHAN FILIGREE'

PSEUDOLARIX AMABILIS

The golden larch, although it's not actually a true larch, is so named because of the rich, orange colour the needles assume before they fall in autumn. These needles are broader, giving a much lushier effect, and the tree is much slower-growing, otherwise it is superficially similar to the European larch, and shares that species' attributes of fresh-green foliage in spring and pleasing symmetry of the bare skeletal branches in the winter months. This is a rarely grown species that deserves to be more widely planted in gardens of all sizes, even smaller ones, for its year-round charms. **AGM.**

Height Slowly to 6m in UK.

Origin Eastern China.

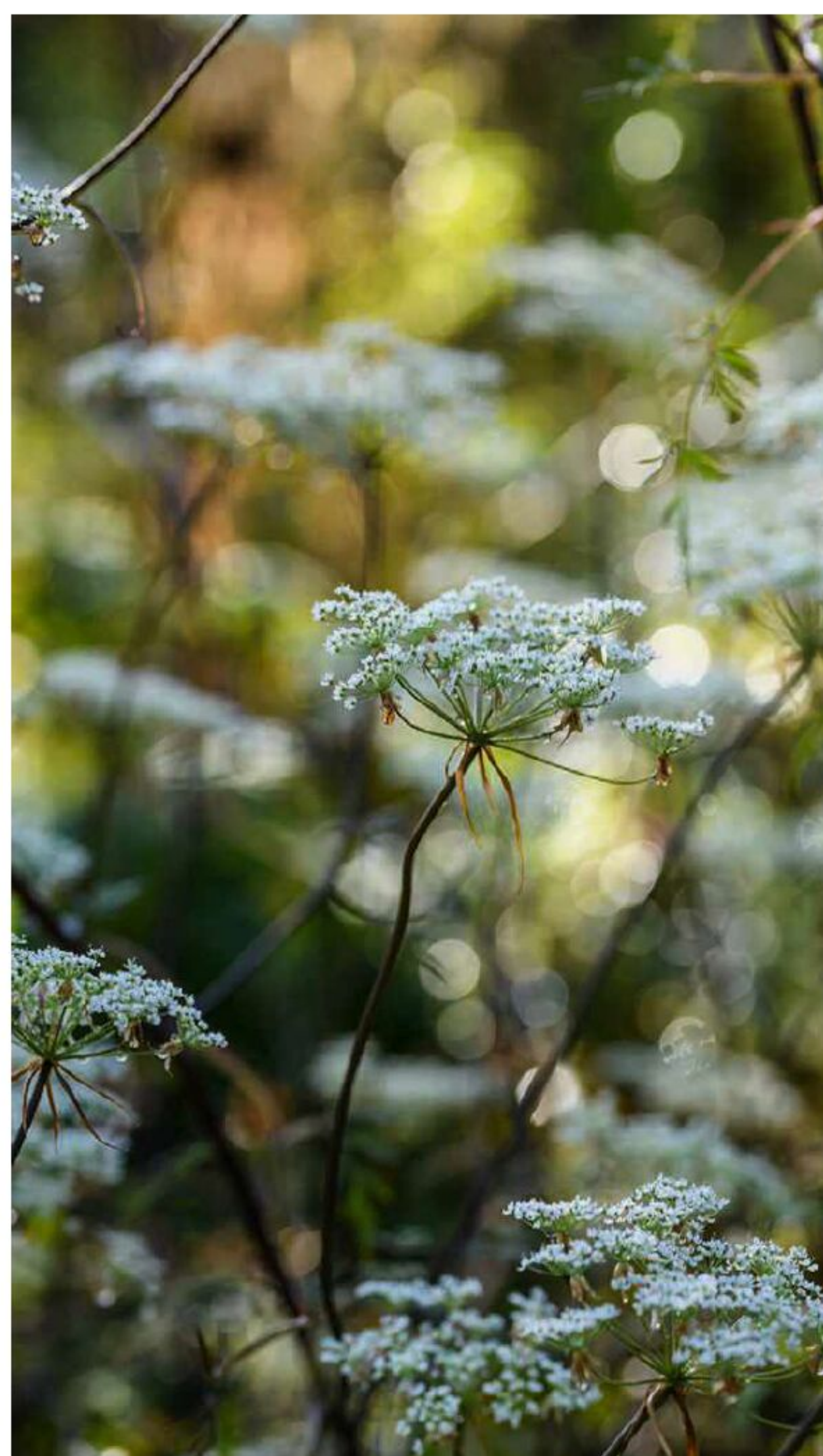
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.

Season of interest Year round. **KW**



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ANGELICA 'LOUSHAN FILIGREE'

I bought this delightful angelica from Paul Barney of Edulis Plants in the UK. Paul collected it from seed in Guizhou province in southwest China. This umbellifer is unique as it flowers in September and October with a beautiful, delicate spray of white flowers, followed by ornamental, umbel-like seedheads. It has prominent, red-veined stems and serrated, light-green foliage, which looks very attractive throughout summer and into autumn. I propagate it by fresh seed sown in autumn, which usually germinates the following spring.

Height 60cm.

Origin China.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest September to October. **JB**

RESTIO SUBVERTICILLATUS

Restios are borderline hardy at Hunting Brook, but I have tested out many, and this one, along with *Cannomois grandis* and *Restio quadratus*, has come through -10°C. This giant, horsetail-like plant performs best with good drainage and in full sun. I have propagated it by seed without the smoke treatment that is usually required to induce germination. It can also be propagated by division at the start of June. I tidy it up in spring by removing any stems that are damaged from the winter weather. The stems look fantastic in flower arrangements. **AGM.**

Height 1.5m.

Origin South Africa.

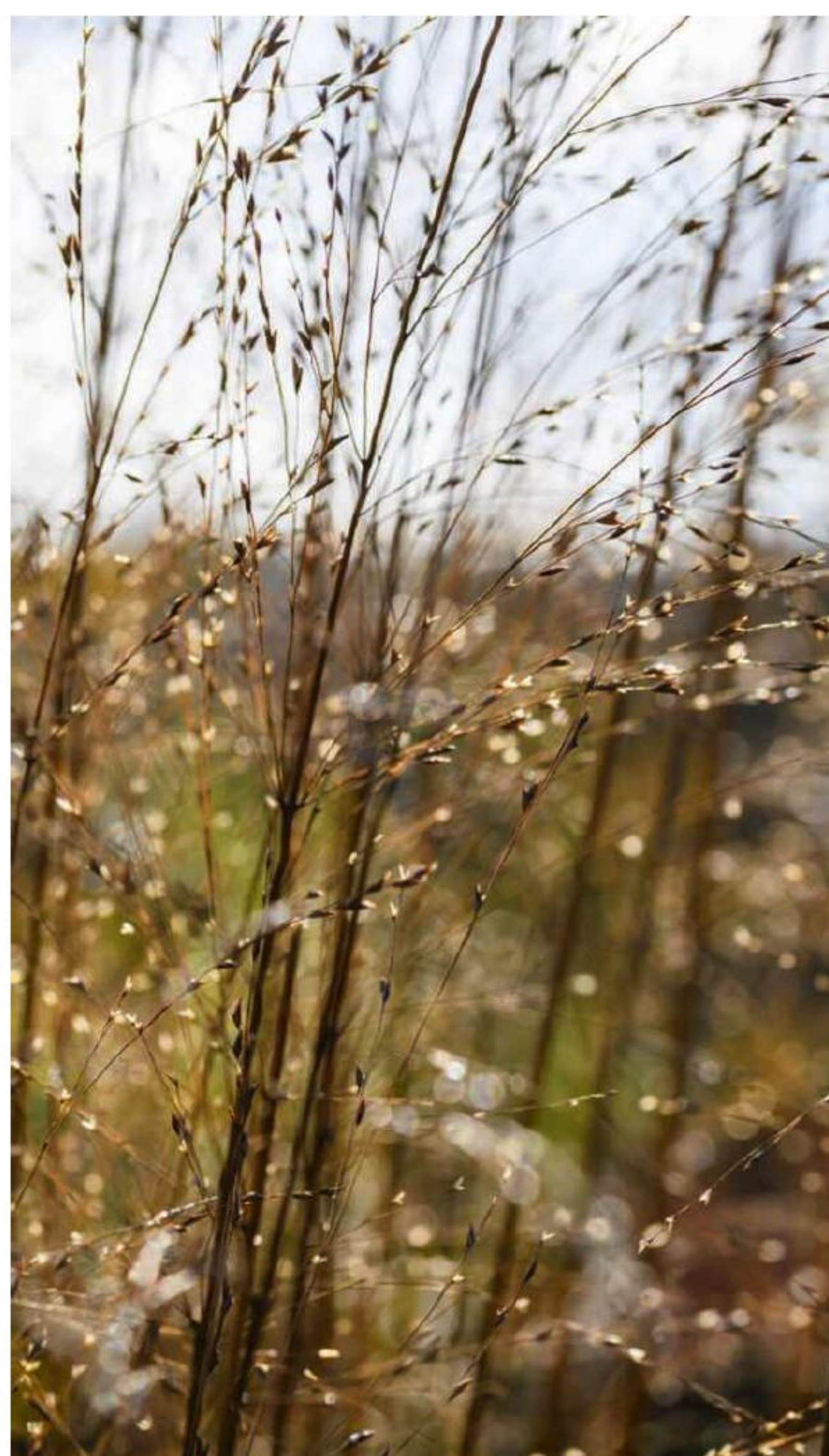
Conditions Well-drained (ideally acidic) soil, but should not dry out in summer; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4-H5.

Season of interest Year round. **JB**



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MISCANTHUS NEPALENSIS

Miscanthus is generally thought of as a robust and solid grass for the back of a border, but this species has a delicacy that can elude more vigorous specimens and gracefully achieves a height of only around 1.5m. During November, the plumes have an elegance when they sway in the breeze and display an ease of movement and transparency that is incredibly appealing. If you believe there is no room for grasses in your garden then I suggest you give this one a try. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Height 1-1.5m.

Origin Himalayas.

Conditions Well-drained, reasonable garden soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.

Season of interest Late-summer flowering; seedheads into winter. **TB**

MOLINIA CAERULEA SUBSP. ARUNDINACEA 'TRANSPARENT'

A wonderful native grass that creates a beautiful transparent haze of flowers at the end of summer. It works well at the front of a border, adding an extra dimension to the planting and it brings you into contact with the garden as you brush past. In autumn it colours up to a wonderful gold, although it will usually collapse in December. Our plant self-seeds quite freely around the garden and there is nothing quite like seeing a plant happily growing where it has put itself. **AGM.**

Height 2m.

Origin Europe, Caucasus, Turkey.

Conditions Moist but free-draining, acid to neutral soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest August to December. **TC**



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AMICIA ZYGOMERIS

Known as the yoke-leaved amicia, this woody-based perennial is an exotic-looking character from the pea family, with gorgeous heart-shaped leaves in pairs on purple petioles and purple-green bracts making a magical foliage plant. The large, yellow flowers are produced at the end of summer as the cherry on top of the cake. Such a tropical-looking plant could be assumed to be tender but it has shown itself hardy down to -10°C. In cold winters it will die back to the base and reshoot in spring. We have had best results from cuttings taken in August.

Height 2m.

Origin Mexico.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun in a sheltered spot.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

Season of interest June to November. **TC**

HUGE, GREY-GREEN NEEDLES STAND STIFFLY AROUND THE SHOOTS, GIVING A FUNKY VIBE

PINUS MONTEZUMAE 'SHEFFIELD PARK'



JASON INGRAM

ANAPHALIS MARGARITACEA 'NEUSCHNEE'

Another of the less flamboyant, easily overlooked plants, that year after year keeps on quietly contributing as a foil for more colourful neighbours. This one makes a compact clump of grey foliage, which from July onwards is topped by sprays of small, papery white flowerheads that last for months. Lovely as a contrast for grey and purple-leaved sedums, smaller red fuchsias and blue agapanthus. This cultivar is more compact than the species.

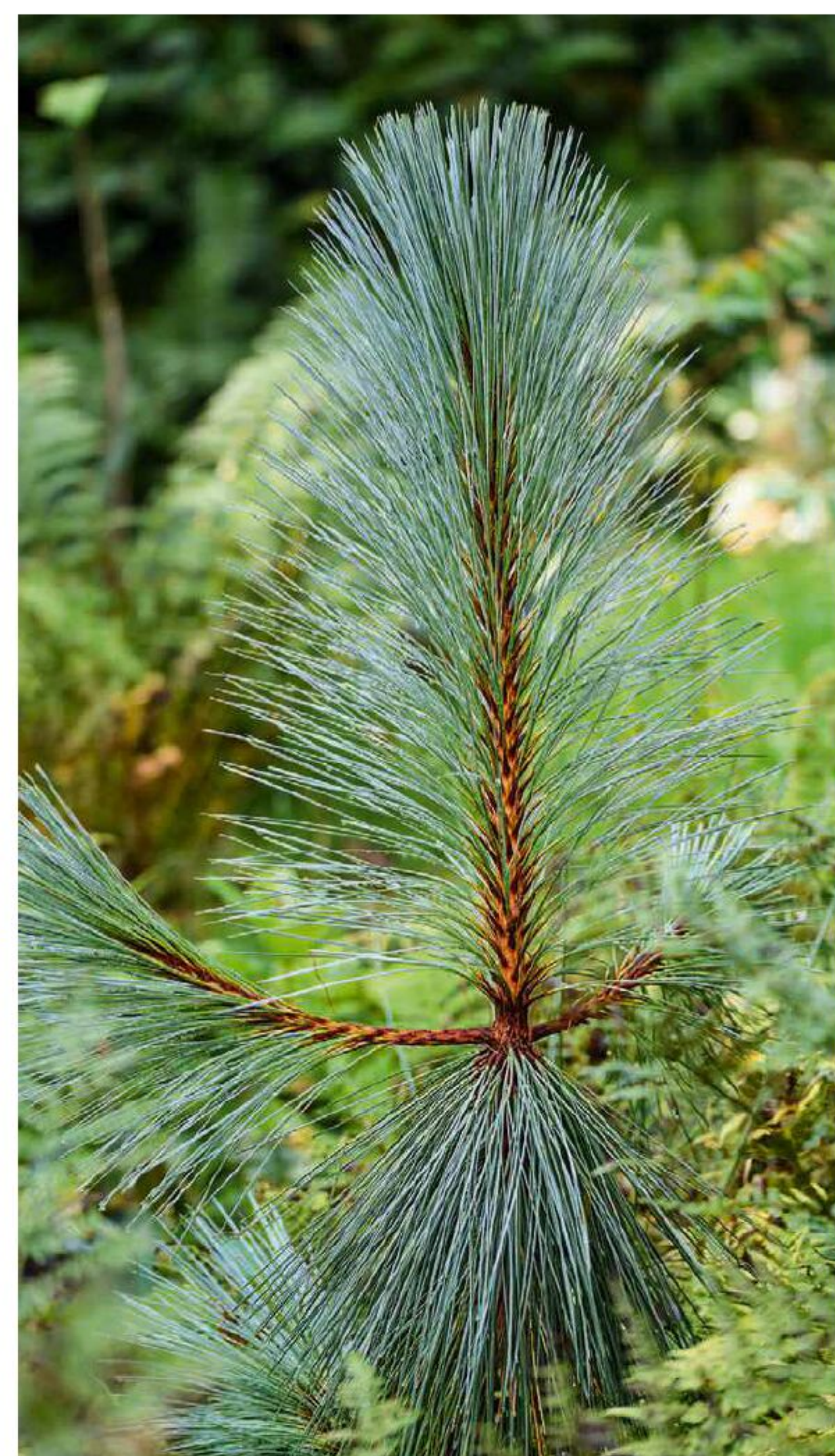
Height 30cm.

Origin Garden (species India, Asia, North America).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Late summer to autumn for flowers. **KW**



JASON INGRAM

PINUS MONTEZUMAE 'SHEFFIELD PARK'

I first saw this pine, with its huge, greyish-green needles, at RHS Garden Wisley and fell in love with it. I knew I had to grow one myself, no matter what. So the search began and I finally bought one from Lime Cross Nursery who were exhibiting at the Great Dixter Plant Fair. It was propagated by Jonathan Tate, the founder of Lime Cross, from the original mother plant, which was planted in 1910 in Sheffield Park in East Sussex. It is propagated by grafting. I love the way it has been used in the Exotic Garden at Wisley, where it is repeated through the beds, giving the garden a very funky vibe.

Height 12m.

Origin Garden (species Mexico).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest Year round. **JB**

GALACTITES TOMENTOSA

In midsummer, this milk thistle produces scented, purple flowers that are much loved by bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects. But it is in autumn and winter when you can really appreciate its crisp, white-and-green variegated foliage. It is among the most stunning foliage found in gardens during November. This thistle adores free-draining, sun-rich locations in the garden and, once established, has great drought-tolerant qualities. I find it best to collect seeds and sow them straight away, as viability can be erratic.

Height 50cm-1m.

Origin Mediterranean, southwestern Europe.

Conditions Free draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 9a-10b.

Season of interest Flowering in summer but excellent crisp foliage in winter. **TB**



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ACAENA MICROPHYLLA
'KUPFERTEPPICH'

I grow this charming plant for its copper-coloured foliage, which comes into its own in autumn and winter. In summer the finely feathered foliage is punctuated by small, yellow flowers that in autumn develop into attractive red burrs. It makes a wonderful groundcover plant but doesn't like to be overshadowed by others. It's best grown in a gravel garden with plenty of light and air. It can also be used to great effect between paving slabs, as it is robust enough to tolerate being occasionally trodden on.

Height 10-20cm.

Origin Garden (species New Zealand).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 7a-8b.

Season of interest Interesting foliage throughout the year. **TB**

THE BRIGHT-BLUE BERRIES LOOK STUNNING AGAINST THE PERSISTING MAROON CALYCES

CLERODENDRUM TRICHOTOMUM

ASTELIA 'RED DEVIL'

This plant is from a selection by Kaikoura Nursery in New Zealand. I use various astelias at Hunting Brook, mostly to provide winter structure for when the perennials have died down. *Astelia* 'Red Devil' is particularly good in repeat plantings in the sand garden, where the sword-like leaves contrast beautifully with the golden, granite sand. The leaves are bronze, reddish and silver in colour, with the red becoming more prominent in the winter when temperatures are lower. I propagate astelias successfully by division in spring, but they can also be propagated by seed sown in spring.

Height 80cm.

Origin New Zealand.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H3.

Season of interest Year round. **JB**



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PERSICARIA MICROCEPHALA 'RED DRAGON'

This is a tough and vigorous perennial, which more than pays its rent throughout the growing season with its striking foliage. Each lance-shaped leaf is a thing of beauty and fascination, purplish-green with a rich, central splash of purple bordered by a silver chevron marking. As an added bonus, at the end of summer into autumn it produces tiny, white flowers. Although it is vigorous, it doesn't spread and can be kept in proportion with its neighbours with a Chelsea chop in May. **AGM.**

Height 1m.

Origin Garden (species Himalaya through to central and eastern China).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade in a sheltered spot.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.

Season of interest April to December. **TC**

EUONYMUS *HAMILTONIANUS* SUBSP. *SIEBOLDIANUS* 'CORAL CHARM'

A wonderful, deciduous, tree-like *Euonymus* that has tremendous autumn colour. In cold weather, its leaves gracefully drop to the ground to reveal clusters of coral-pink fruits with orange-red seeds that can persist well into winter, and which are a glorious sight when kissed with frost on a crisp, sunny November day. Makes an excellent tree for a smaller garden or as a lower-storey shrub in a woodland garden.

Height 4-8m.

Origin Korea, Japan.

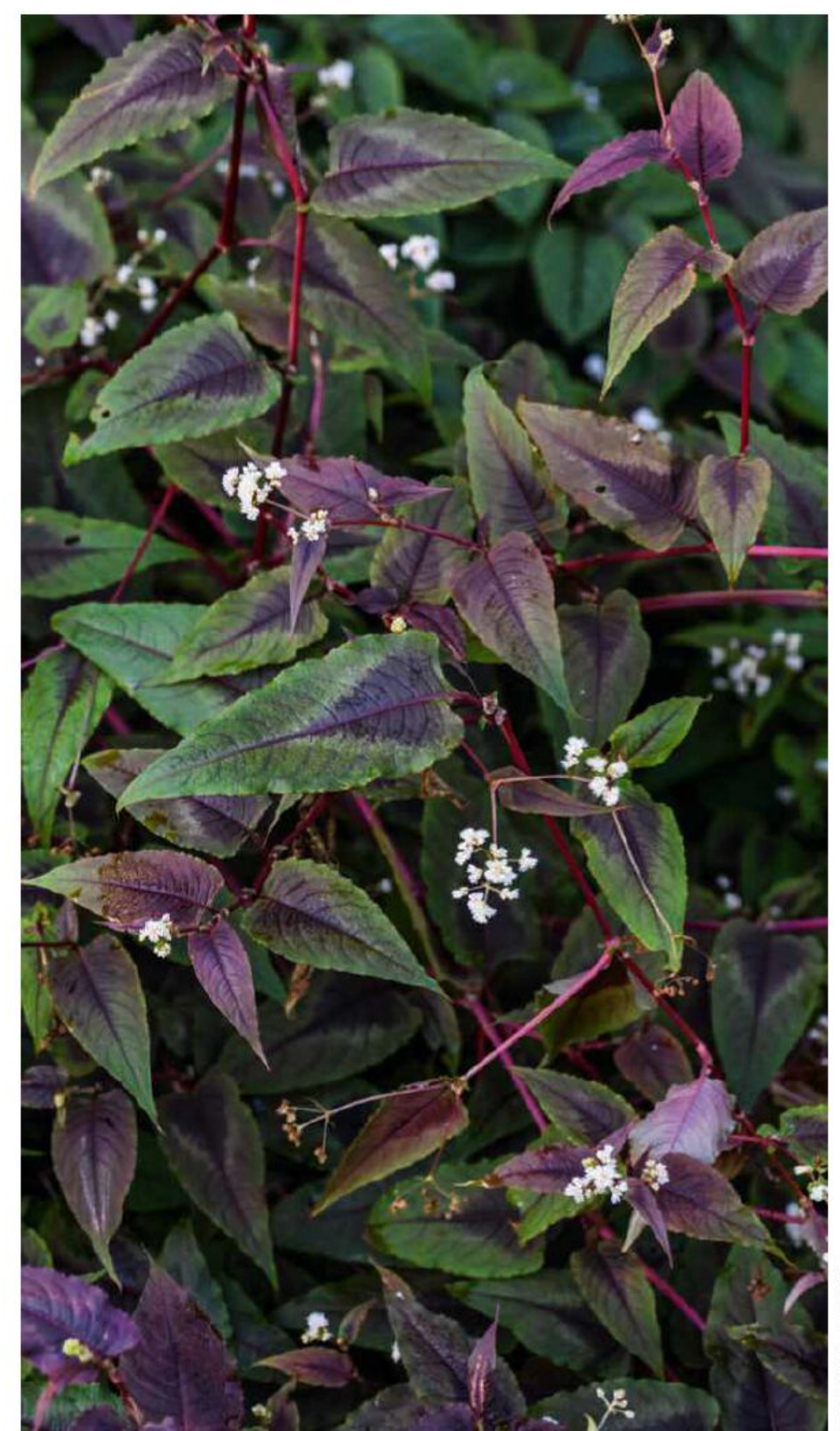
Conditions Moist but free-draining soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 7a-8b.

Season of interest Autumn and late winter. **TB**



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ASTILBE 'BEAUTY OF ERNST'

A relatively new cultivar, introduced in 2005 by the Dutch grower Henk Holtmaat. In summer the bright-green, spring leaves mature to a purple colour, then in autumn these fade to a wide colour spectrum that ranges from green and purple to gold, orange and deep red, which probably accounts for its alternative selling name of 'Color Flash'. The pale-pink blooms, held on dark-red, upright stems, also offer good autumn colour and, after flowering, dry to form reddish-brown silhouettes.

Height 60cm.

Origin Garden origin (species China and Japan).

Conditions Moist, rich soil; part to full shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Autumn. **FVZ**

ABELIA X GRANDIFLORA

Plants that have become popular garden fixtures can easily be overlooked in favour of something new and unknown. But sometimes, it's worth reminding ourselves that plants such as *Abelia x grandiflora* have remained popular for a reason. It is incredibly versatile, providing structure and soft-pink flowers from early summer to late autumn. Given a reasonable garden soil, it is trouble free and stands strong with glossy foliage. A plant that offers structure without compromising colour and flowers.

Height 2.5-4m.

Origin Garden hybrid between *A. chinensis* and *A. uniflora*.

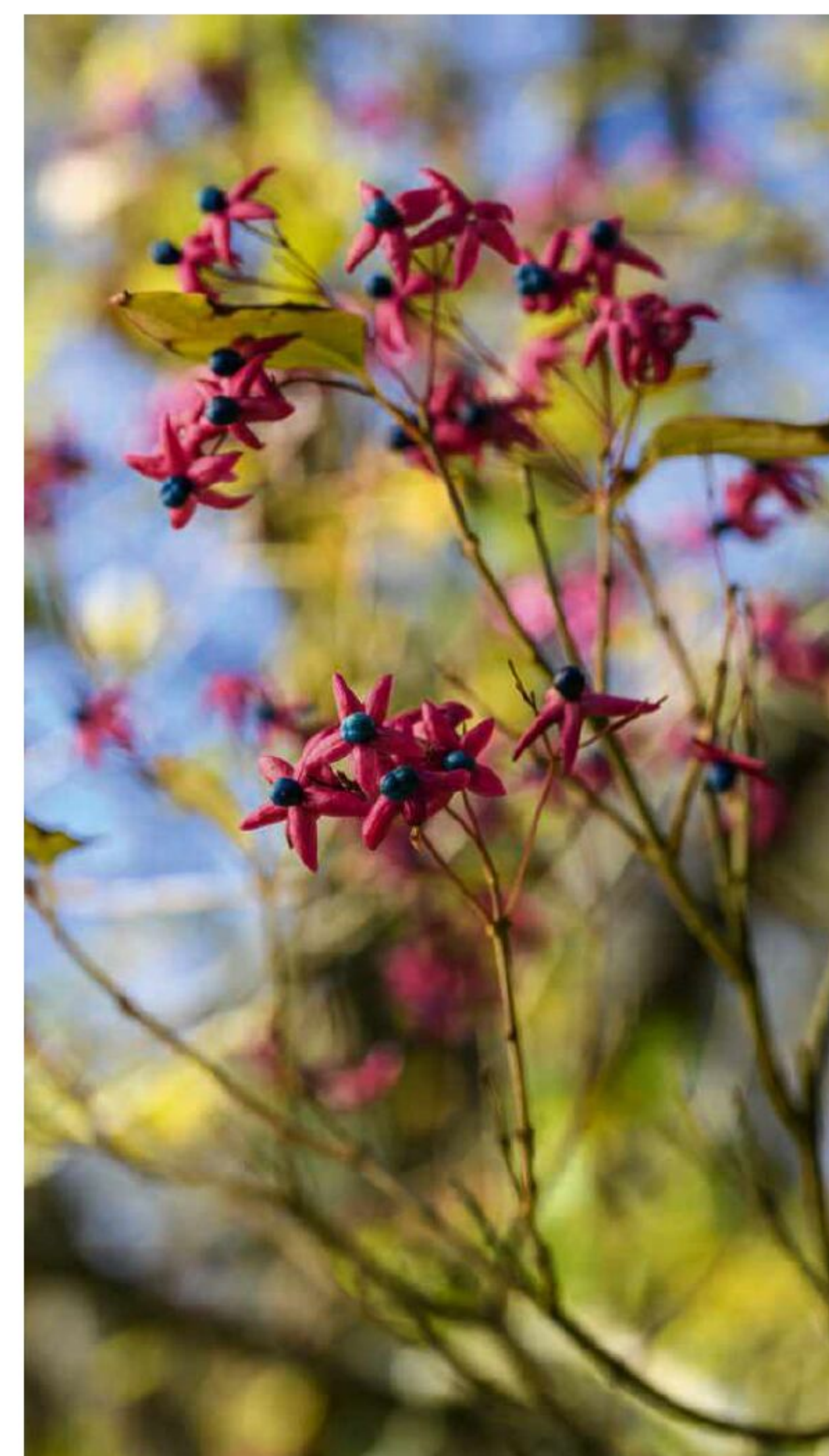
Conditions Fertile, moist but well-drained soil; sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Flowers from early summer into late autumn. **TB**



MAAYEK DE RIDDER



JASON INGRAM

CLERODENDRUM TRICHOTOMUM

A strong-growing, large shrub that flowers in August and September with extremely fragrant, white flowers that are enclosed in maroon calyces. These are followed by bright-blue berries that look stunning against the persisting maroon calyces, which darken with age. The foliage, when crushed, has a mild scent of peanut butter and has good yellow colouring in autumn. But the plant is probably most attractive after leaf fall when the stems are naked apart from these fascinating fruits.

Height 4m.

Origin China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, north Philippines.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest August to December. **TC**



ACER PALMATUM 'SEIRYU'

I was excited to see this plant when it was first introduced to the UK, as it had the finely cut leaf form of the smaller, dissected-leaved group with the larger growth habit of taller Japanese maples. I have still not seen another cultivar with this combination. The intervening years have not disappointed either as 'Seiryu' makes an open, slightly rounded, broad-topped, small tree that beautifully accentuates the delicate tracery of its foliage. It produces a reliably glorious bonfire of autumn colour, one of the last in the season to do so. **AGM.**

Height 6m.

Origin Garden (species Japan).

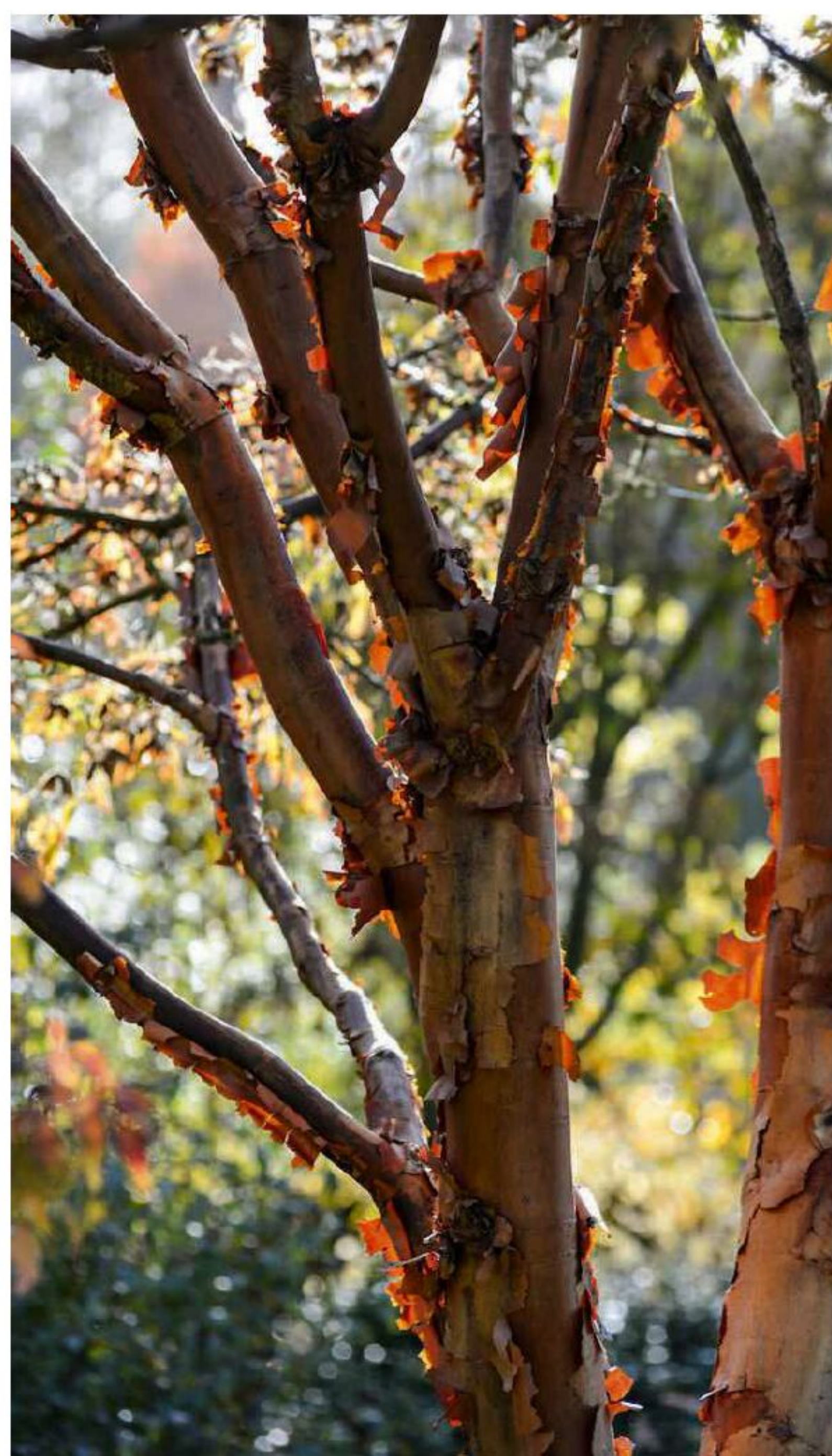
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Summer to autumn. **KW**

WHEN ITS PEELING, PAPERY BARK IS BACKLIT, THIS MAPLE HAS A MAGICAL, TRANSLUCENT QUALITY

ACER GRISEUM



JASON INGRAM

ACER GRISEUM

In late autumn and winter, when its peeling, papery bark is backlit, this maple has a magical, translucent quality. For the most dramatic effect, it is best sited where it can be viewed from all angles, and light can penetrate the peeling bark. Introduced from China by the plant hunter Ernest Wilson in 1901, it is slow growing and will struggle in exposed garden situations, but place this paperbark maple in the right site, with the right growing conditions, and you'll be patting yourself on the back for years to come. **AGM.**

Height 4-8m.

Origin Central China.

Conditions Fertile, moist but well-drained soil; sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Autumn foliage and winter stem interest. **TB**

BIDENS AUREA 'HANNAY'S LEMON DROP'

A tough, hardy perennial with lemon-yellow, delicate flowers with white tips on tall stems. It makes a steadily spreading clump, which is excellent intermingled with *Symphytotrichum laeve* 'Calliope', ornamental grasses and spring-flowering shrubs to create a simple, wild planting with year-round interest. Occasionally, these clumps will need to be lifted and divided to reinvigorate the plants and the soil, control perennial weeds and to keep the clumps in proportion with the planting.

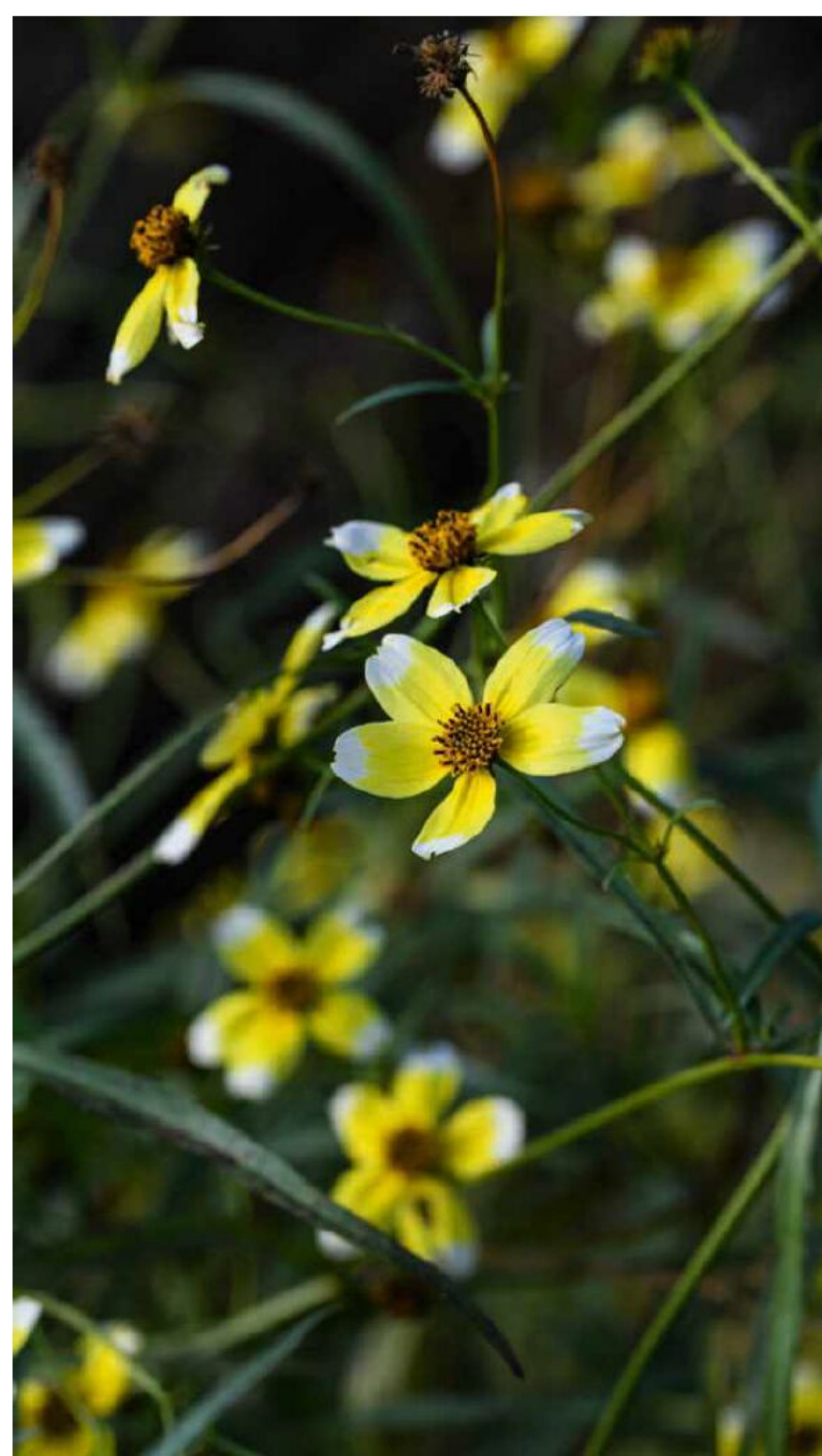
Height 1m.

Origin Garden (species southeast USA, Mexico).

Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest September to November. **TC**



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ERAGROSTIS CURVULA

Native to South Africa, this rarely met grass is sometimes called the African love grass, but is also known as weeping love grass for its arching habit. It does need space to really show off its rounded, weeping shape, and attention should be paid to checking that the inevitable seedlings are not in unwanted places. Despite these caveats, this is a lovely grass whose graceful flowering shoots change colour from grey-green in summer to straw-coloured in autumn, and through the winter months. I cut the clumps to the ground each spring when they quickly start growing again.

Height 1-1.2m.

Origin Central to southern Africa.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest Summer through to autumn. **KW**

PURPLE-TINTED, LOBED LEAVES TURN A RICHER PLUM RED AS THE SEASON PROGRESSES

VIRBURNUM BETULIFOLIUM

ALLIUM THUNBERGII 'OZAWA'

This ornamental onion flowers late, from September to November, producing clusters of bright-purple to purple-pink flowers. Its thin, hollow, grassy leaves are attractive throughout the growing season and even turn slightly orange when temperatures fall below freezing. It forms neat clumps, so it is also suitable for pots. The species was first introduced from Japan in the 18th century, but this cultivar, which is more compact and flowers richly, was selected by the nurseryman George Schenk in Washington State, USA.

Height 40cm.

Origin Garden (species Japan, China and Korea).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.

Season of interest Autumn. **FVZ**



JASON INGRAM

GALANTHUS REGINAE-OLGAE 'ELEN'

I suspect the craze for snowdrop collecting is rooted partly in the sparsity of other plants flowering so early in the year when most snowdrops flower and when growth and colour of any sort are so welcome. This species of snowdrop, which flowers in late autumn to early winter, often goes under the radar, perhaps because our gardens are still quite colourful if frosts haven't come early, and winter despair is yet to set in. This cultivar would be a winner whenever it flowered, with a glorious honeyed scent thrown in for good measure.

Height 20cm.

Origin Garden (species Greece, northern Mediterranean).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 4a-9b.

Season of interest Autumn. **KW**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER

CLEMATIS 'POLISH SPIRIT'

A favourite clematis. The medium-sized, dark-violet flowers contrast nicely with the fresh-green leaves. It is a clematis with a rich and long flowering period and one that is strong and almost never suffers from wilting disease. It is a good grower that can be easily guided through bushes and small trees such as *Elaeagnus* 'Quicksilver'. It also combines wonderfully with climbing roses, such as the yellow 'Golden Showers', the voluptuous, pink Eden Rose 88 (= 'Melviolin') or the single-flowered Open Arms (= 'Chewpixcel'). **AGM.**

Height 3m.

Origin Hybrid of garden origin.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Late summer to autumn. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER



MAAYKE DERIDDER

VITIS VINIFERA 'PURPUREA'

We love purple-coloured leaves – and while there is a wealth of red-leaved perennials, annuals, trees and shrubs to choose from, there are fewer options when it comes to climbers. Essentially the choice is between *Clematis montana* and this *Vitis vinifera*, which has lobed leaves that are purple-tinted in summer and turn a richer plum colour later in autumn. The leaves are beautiful, but the grapes are not particularly worth picking – even birds reject them – but they will hang on a wall or pergola until December. **AGM.**

Height 8m.

Origin Garden (species central and southern Europe).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Summer to autumn. **FVZ**

PSEUDOPANAX CRASSIFOLIUS VAR. TRIFOLIOLATUS

When combined with perennials, this bizarre foliage plant gives the garden the kind of quirky look I love. It is a member of the Araliaceae family – my go-to plants for creating a light canopy over my borders. This plant is still in its juvenile phase, with its thin, weird-looking leaves and narrow growth habit. *Pseudopanax* usually metamorphosises into the adult phase around the age of seven to ten years, when its structure becomes more tree-like. This one has survived -10°C with me. I propagate it by seed or cuttings taken during summer.

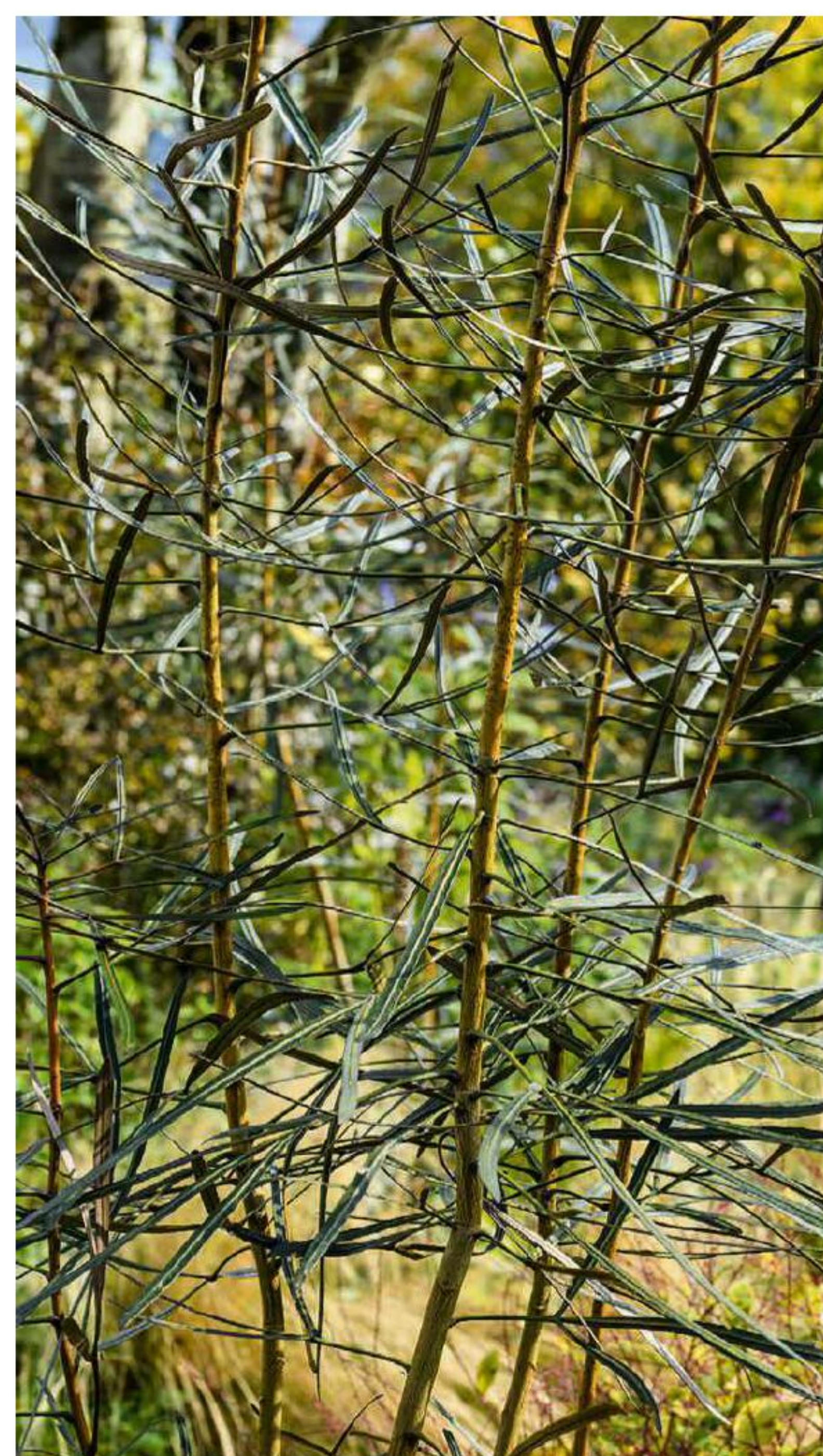
Height 3-5m.

Origin New Zealand.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest Year round. **JB**



JASON INGRAM



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VIBURNUM BETULIFOLIUM

I originally collected this plant in China 20 years ago on an expedition with the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland. I'll never forget the messy job of cleaning the berries and preparing them for sowing. This viburnum has spectacular, yellow, autumn colour but it is the berries that I grow it for. It is one of the best shrubs at Hunting Brook for producing large bunches of berries that last well into spring. They are best planted in groups to encourage more flowering and fruiting. I have raised the canopy on them to create a multi-stemmed effect with a weeping habit.

Height 3m.

Origin China, Tibet, Taiwan.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Flowers May to June; berries September to February. **JB**



GARDENS

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WINTER AND EARLY SPRING

When the days draw in and the frosts begin to bite, there is still drama and interest to be had with ornamental grasses, reliable evergreens and sculptural deciduous plants as well as early spring bulbs

ERICA CARNEA **'DECEMBER RED'**

Erica is a genus that deserves to be used more often. There are many different spring heathers, and with careful selection you can cultivate a patch that will flower from November to April. These flowers are so special through the darkest months and their hardiness is admirable, blooming their hearts out through snow and ice. They work well in a wild garden situation with naturalised bulbs, self-seeders and low grasses such as *Stipa tenuissima*. This rather lovely cultivar opens pink and darkens to red, persisting to early spring.

Height 50cm.

Origin Garden (species the Alps).

Conditions Neutral to acidic, free-draining soil; sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-7b.

Season of interest December to April. **TC**



CAMELLIA SASANQUA 'CRIMSON KING'

An early flowering species of camellia that always brings me a tremendous amount of joy. Flowering well before the main thrust of camellia blooms appear, its single, crimson-red flowers have a simplicity that also lends itself to many different planting styles and schemes. It's a large shrub that benefits from a sheltered position. If your garden is in an exposed and colder climate, try growing this plant in a container, but if you do so make sure that it doesn't dry out during summer for a strong flowering performance. **AGM.**

Height 2.5-4m.

Origin Garden (species Japan).

Conditions Moisture-retentive, acidic, fertile and free-draining soil; partial shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 8a-9b.

Season of interest Autumn and winter. **TB**

SMALL, GLOSSY, SPIKY LEAVES AND SCARLET BERRIES THAT REMAIN UNTIL CHRISTMAS

ILEX X AQUIPERNYI DRAGON LADY (= 'MESCHICK')



JASON INGRAM

ILEX X AQUIPERNYI DRAGON LADY (= 'MESCHICK')

A good plant for dry shade, this upright, narrowly conical, large shrub is an interesting hybrid between our native holly and *I. pernyi* from western China that has resulted in some exceptionally hardy and handsome plants. As a female clone, this cultivar produces scarlet berries from autumn that remain on the tree for Christmas, provided birds don't get them. The small glossy, spiky leaves make an attractive foliage plant. **AGM.**

Height 5m (dependent on pruning).

Origin North American cross of *I. aquifolium* x *I. pernyi*.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.

Season of interest Year-round for foliage; November to January for berries. **TC**

SALVIA CONFERTIFLORA

Salvia confertiflora blooms until the beginning of the winter, although it's not hardy so you'll need to bring it inside by December. But placed under glass, this salvia just keeps on flowering. It offers an abundance of short, hairy, reddish-brown flowers with a hint of orange held on very long, narrow, unbranched flower stems. It can become rather woody, but if you prune it back in autumn you can force it to produce more shoots, otherwise it will be standing on very long legs. The large leaves are matt dark green and wrinkled, and smell spicy. The plant is attractive to bees and butterflies. **AGM.**

Height 1.5m.

Origin Brazil.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H2.

Season of interest Summer to winter. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER



JASON INGRAM

LUPINUS ARBOREUS 'SNOW QUEEN'

I've long had a passion for lupins and this lovely evergreen shrub has to be one of the best. It flowers in May and June with loose panicles of slightly fragrant, white flowers that flush purple as they mature. But its beautiful foliage is a joy throughout the year, giving a special fresh green in December, when things can feel a little drab. It's easily propagated from seed, which is best sown in July for flowering plants the following year. It also responds well to a hard cut-back in spring, should it ever get too big for its spot.

Height 2m.

Origin California, USA.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade in a sheltered spot.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest Year round for foliage; May to June for flowers. **TC**

ITS REWARD IN WINTER IS ITS LARGE, VIOLET FLOWERS WITH CONTRASTING YELLOW SIGNALS

IRIS UNGUICULARIS 'MARY BARNARD'

CAREX NIGRA 'ON-LINE'

This small, clump-forming sedge has variegated, grey-green leaves with a narrow golden edge that make it stand out when used between other plants. Its leaves look beautiful right up until winter when the gold-coloured hue becomes more intense. Between April and June it blooms with dark-brown spikes. Perfect for pots, it is also a great groundcover plant for larger surfaces, without being too invasive. Best of all, this *Carex* is very resistant to frost and will grow in wet soil.

Height 30cm.

Origin Garden (species Europe, Asia and America).

Conditions Moist, humus-rich soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Summer to winter. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER



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POLYSTICHUM SETIFERUM 'DAHLEM'

A fairly recent selection of the erect growing form of the soft shield fern that was discovered at Dahlem Botanical Garden in Berlin. It's a very decorative fern with fresh, delicate and finely serrated leaves and is an excellent groundcover for growing beneath shrubs and trees. Like many polystichums it makes bulbils along the midrib. When the fronds are anchored to the soil, the bulbils start to root, propagating new ferns. It is close to the form of 'Divisilobum' and in some classifications falls within that group.

Height 70cm.

Origin Garden (species Europe).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part to full shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 6a-8b.

Season of interest Year round. **FVZ**

SALIX IRRORATA

This is a fast, strong-growing willow that stands out from the fiery crowd thanks to its blue-white stem. As the season continues, wonderfully soft and tactile catkins appear on the stems before the foliage emerges in spring. Like most shrubs grown for stem colour, a hard prune when the leaves appear will ensure the strongest colour the following winter. To get the most impact from the stems, try to site this willow in the foreground of a dark, evergreen foil, as you'll find the shrubs are illuminated with a dark background, making their impact all the more powerful. **AGM.**

Height 1.5-2.5m.

Origin USA to Mexico.

Conditions Moisture-retentive, fertile soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest November to March. **TB**



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EUONYMUS FORTUNEI 'WOLONG GHOST'

Discovered by the plantsman and plant collector Dan Hinkley in the Wolong National Nature Reserve in Sichuan, China, this evergreen groundcover has narrow, dark-green leaves that are marked with silvery-white veins and looks a little like a ghostly, tinted *Vinca minor*. Over time, it will form a carpet and climb in other plants, and it can also be trained up a support. Fortunately, however, it's not as invasive as ivy. It works well when combined with small-leaved hostas and hellebores. **AGM.**

Height 40cm.

Origin China.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to full shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-10b.

Season of interest Year round. **FVZ**

BRASSICA OLERACEA 'DAZZLING BLUE'

Dark-leaved kales, such as the popular 'Nero di Toscana', are now often used as much in the flower border as the vegetable garden. This one has beautiful, blue-green leaves with red veins, and the intensity of the colour increases in cold weather. It even withstands frost. In spring it blooms abundantly with soft-yellow flowers, then after flowering the following May it is over, in time to grow new plants from seeds for the new season. It is also a good plant for attracting pollinating insects.

Height 90cm.

Origin Garden (species coastal areas of southern and western Europe).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 2a-11.

Season of interest Year round. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DERIDDER



JASON INGRAM

IRIS UNGUICULARIS 'MARY BARNARD'

I'm always amazed at how tolerant of poor and sun-baked positions this iris can be. Often, it hugs walls and enjoys a roasting during summer and then rewards us in winter with large, violet flowers that have contrasting yellow signals. Flowering in December isn't without its challenges, but by planting against a sunny wall, you reduce the impact of the hard frosts, which can damage the freshly emerged flowers. If flowers are hit by the frost, many more soon appear. **AGM.**

Height 50cm.

Origin Garden (species eastern Mediterranean and North Africa).

Conditions Free-draining soil; a sheltered position in full sun.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest December to February. **TB**

AS THE BARK PEELS AWAY FROM THE WHITE TRUNK IT TAKES ON A CINNAMON COLOURATION

BETULA UTILIS SUBSP. *ALBOSINENSIS* 'BOWLING GREEN'



JASON INGRAM

BETULA UTILIS SUBSP. *ALBOSINENSIS* 'BOWLING GREEN'

If you visit the Winter Garden at Hillier's Arboretum in Hampshire, look out for one of the most stunning specimens of this tree, underplanted with *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Kokuryu'. As the bark peels away from the white trunk of this birch, it takes on a cinnamon colouration that glows in the winter light. Birch work very well in all sizes of garden; their canopies aren't dense so they're not too dominant, and so offer plenty of room for varied underplanting around the base.

Height 12-15m.

Origin Garden (species Western China).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or partial shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 6a-8b.

Season of interest November to March. **TB**

SALIX ALBA VAR. *VITELLINA* 'BRITZENSIS'

Many gardeners choose evergreen shrubs in winter over deciduous trees with their bare branches, but we love the branches of this willow. After the leaves have fallen and temperatures drop, its branches take on a beautiful orange that creates a wonderful contrast against the winter sky, whether blue or grey. In spring, when the twigs begin to shoot, the branches turn green again. As perennial growers we spend a lot of time looking groundward, so at this time of year, when there is so little flower and foliage to see, it's good to have an excuse to raise our eyes.

Height 5m (pollarded).

Origin Europe.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Winter. **FVZ**



MAYKE DE RIDDER



JASON INGRAM

HEUCHERA SANGUINEA 'GEISHA'S FAN'

A robust cultivar with mounds of purple-and-grey, marbled foliage, persisting well into the winter. Best for the front of a border or path edge, it also works well underplanted with bulbs such as snowdrops and species narcissi. Heucheras also make superb subjects for groundcover, especially alongside hellebores and cyclamen. If grown in containers, keep them on the dry side in the winter to deter vine weevils, which can find them irresistible.

Height 50cm.

Origin Garden (species western USA).

Conditions Fertile, free-draining soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

Season of interest Flowers from May with foliage interest throughout the year. **TB**

*HAMAMELIS X
INTERMEDIA* 'JELENA'

Although they're among the most attractive winter-flowering trees, the *H. japonica* x *H. mollis* hybrid witch hazels can be slow to establish, preferring humus-rich soil and part shade. This one is possibly my favourite, with dense clusters of large, yellow flowers, suffused with rich copper-red and appearing almost orange, with a sweet, yet delicate, scent. Raised in Kalmthout Arboretum, Belgium, and named after the botanist and gardener Jelena de Belder-Kovacic. **AGM.**

Height 4m.

Origin Garden (species China and Japan).

Conditions Neutral to acid soil, seems to appreciate a little shelter; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest February to March. **TC**

LOOK CLOSELY AND YOU'LL SEE SILVER-GREY, JADE GREEN, DARK GREEN AND A HINT OF CRIMSON

ASTELIA NERVOSA

VERONICA OCHRACEA 'JAMES STIRLING'

This hebe (formerly known as *Hebe ochracea* 'James Stirling') will be familiar to many gardeners. Over-familiarity, however, can sometimes lead to loss of interest and overlooking merits in plants. I was guilty of this with 'James Stirling' but having a plant left over one year, I planted it where its distinctive rounded shape, leaf colour and somewhat rigid texture contrasted with the soft feathery grass *Stipa tenuissima*. It has proved itself to be a hardy focal point, making a mound 1m across and acting as an essential foil to agapanthus, helianthemums and many other plants. **AGM.**

Height 50cm.

Origin Garden (species New Zealand).

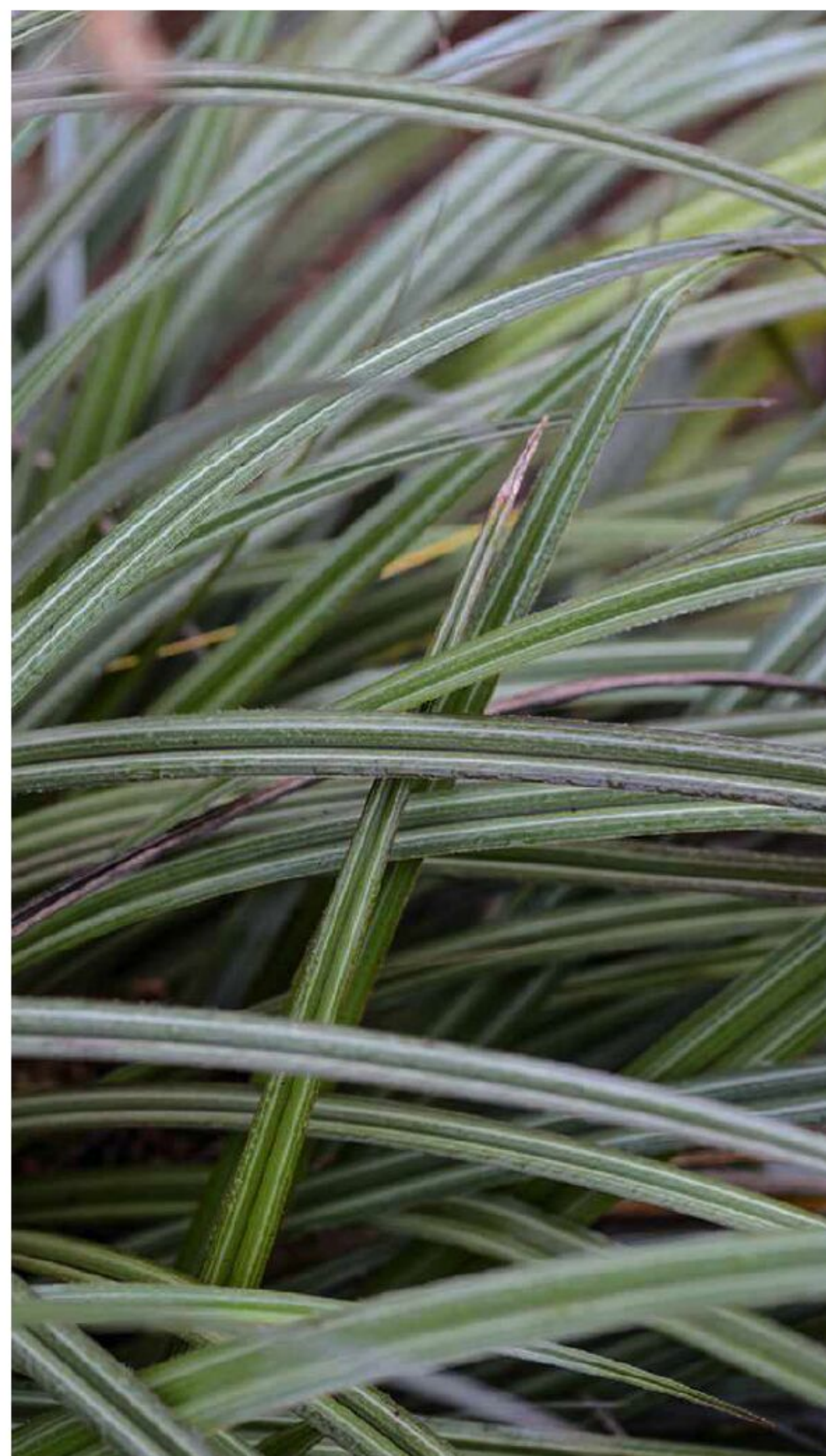
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

Season of interest Year round. **KW**



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ASTELIA NERVOSA

The bush flax is an evergreen plant with tough, leathery leaves that merits close inspection for the subtle variety of colours in its foliage. Although this is superficially grey, take a closer look and you'll see jade green, dark green and silver-grey with the faintest hint of crimson along its edge and central vein, all running longitudinally along each leaf's length. This colour combination will link well with many other foliage plants. Makes an arching dome of leaves eventually around 90cm high and 2m across when happy. The flowers, which are held on short central spikes, are insignificant and easily missed.

Height 60cm-1m.

Origin New Zealand.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.

Season of interest Year round. **KW**

NARCISSUS 'SPOIROT'

A beautiful hoop-petticoat daffodil that increases by bulb division satisfyingly quickly. I have not noticed it setting seed so it stays where you plant it. This cultivar is rather like a vigorous, larger-flowered version of the similar *Narcissus gigas* (formerly *N. bulbocodium* var. *citrinus*), and both have thin, sedge-like leaves. The latter species would definitely make my top ten spring bulbs because it will seed itself around, creating drifts of lemon-yellow flowers that will emerge through anything low-growing enough to allow them to do so, including thin grass. A wonderful naturalising bulb. **AGM.**

Height 20cm in flower.

Origin Garden (species southern Europe).

Conditions Most soils; sun.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest Early spring. **KW**



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HAMAMELIS X INTERMEDIA 'PALLIDA'

Usually begins flowering towards the end of December, and we have made it a Christmas tradition to pick a small sprig to enjoy its powerful, fruity scent indoors. The start of its flowering normally coincides with the winter solstice, which is also the cue for the first crocus and snowdrops, so it has become a symbol for me of the new year and the possibilities and excitement that may bring. Flowers for six to eight weeks and has lovely, clear-yellow autumn foliage. **AGM.**

Height 3m.

Origin Garden hybrid (species China and Japan).

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Winter; autumn for leaf colour. **KW**

PITTOSPORUM DAPHNIPHYLLOIDES

This is a superior evergreen shrub that I would love to see used more. From March until June it produces panicles of scented, yellow flowers, followed in summer by red fruits, which by winter turn black. If grown in a sheltered spot, the leathery leaves look healthy all year. I suggest pruning it to create a small evergreen tree as otherwise it has a scruffy habit. It survived the winter of 2010 when the temperatures got to -10°C. I propagate it by cuttings in summer, but it can also be propagated easily by seeds sown in spring when they are ripe.

Height 2-5m.

Origin China and Taiwan.

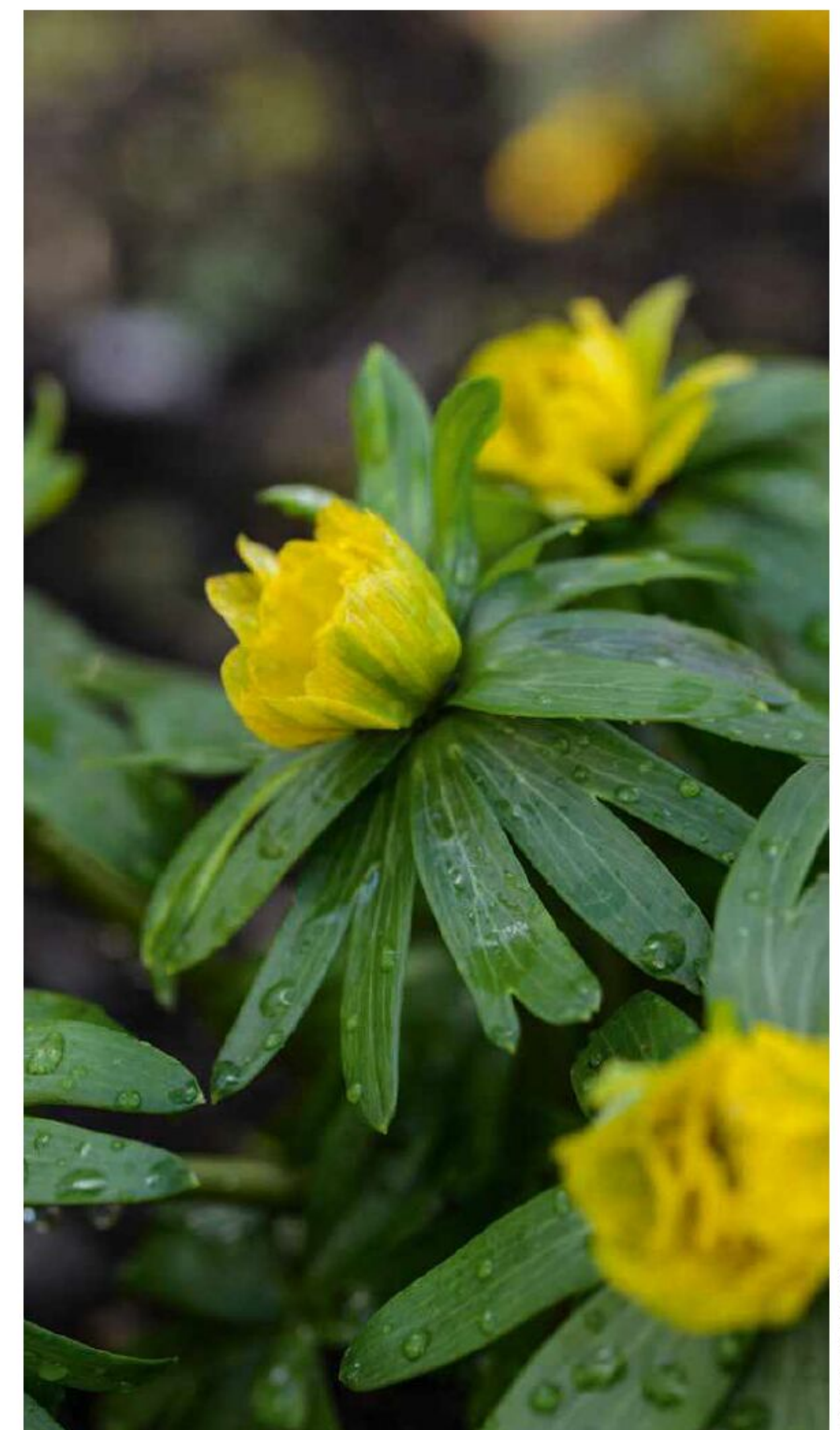
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun and sheltered from cold winds.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest Year round. **JB**



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ERANTHIS HYEMALIS 'NOËL AYRES'

I would collect anything that flowers this early, but I especially love *Eranthis* for their vibrant yellow flowers at a time when there is so little colour in the garden. This particular cultivar flowers a little later than most others. It bursts into bloom in mid to late February with double flowers and outer petals that are more green than yellow. I propagate these by division when the leaves start to turn yellow (after flowering) or from seed sown once ripe. They look good combined with the less vigorous snowdrops and early flowering crocuses.

Height 10cm.

Origin Garden (species western Europe).

Conditions Moisture-retentive soil with good drainage; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Spring. **JB**

PIERIS FORMOSA VAR.
FORRESTII 'JERMYNS'

One of my top ten shrubs for winter effect, though it needs a non-limey soil. Its red buds are very good for flower arranging, and the colder the weather the more intense the red becomes. From these, white, heather-like, bell-shaped flowers open in spring, and these are best removed after flowering to improve flowering the following year. If you forget, it may flower only every other year. Striking, purple-red young foliage will follow if frosts permit.

Height Up to 3m.

Origin Garden selection (species native to southwest Asia and Himalayas).

Conditions Ericaceous soil; sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Spring/early summer for new foliage; winter for flowerbuds. **KW**

A HAZE OF PINK CATKINS FADE TO SILVER BEFORE COVERING THEMSELVES IN YELLOW POLLEN

SALIX GRACILISTYLA 'MOUNT ASO'



JASON INGRAM

TRACHELOSPERMUM JASMINOIDES 'WILSONII'

This star jasmine is a self-supporting, evergreen climber of fairly slow growth, covering itself in sprays of highly scented, small, creamy-white flowers in summer, set against the dark-green, oval leaves. Not considered fully hardy, it is usually grown against a warm wall, but I've found it's also happy on a sheltered, south-facing bank where it surprisingly makes a weed-suppressing carpet of foliage, which for much of the year is a richly suffused purple. However, it doesn't seem to flower as much as a wall-grown plant.

Height 4m (against a wall).

Origin Southeast Asia.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

Season of interest Year round for foliage; summer for flowers. **KW**



JASON INGRAM

PARROTIA PERSICA

A small, spreading tree with year-round interest. In spring, its fresh-green foliage is similar to that of a beech, although its leaves break bud several weeks earlier. In autumn, it has some of the best leaf colour, even on chalk soils, with spectacular displays of crimson and gold. But in winter it is especially charming with its crooked silhouette and beautiful bark, which is flaked, leaving a mottled pattern, rather like a London plane. Best of all are its sweet little red flowers, which appear in the depths of winter, promising warmer days around the corner. **AGM.**

Height 8m.

Origin North Iran to Caucasus.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Year round, with flowers January to February. **TC**



JASON INGRAM

SALIX GRACILISTYLA 'MOUNT ASO'

This beautiful willow is a relatively new introduction and one of the most attractive of all catkin-bearing shrubs. Selected by a cut-flower specialist in Japan who quickly saw its potential in floristry, the stems can be used fresh or dried. It is also an outstanding shrub in the border, flowering in late winter through to early spring, with a haze of large, pink, male catkins. These fade to silver before covering themselves in yellow pollen. Best when coppiced every three or four years to encourage new growth. Easy to propagate from hardwood cuttings.

Height 1.5m.

Origin Japan.

Conditions Best in heavy soils and damp spots; most situations.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.

Season of interest February to March. **TC**

THE BRIGHT, STRIPED, GOLDEN-ORANGE FOLIAGE ADDS RICH WINTER COLOUR AND IMPACT

LIBERTIA PEREGRINANS

VIBURNUM X BODNANTENSE 'CHARLES LAMONT'

In winter this viburnum produces blooms of fragrant, pink, tubular flowers that over time fade to a lighter tint. To my mind, it is far lovelier than the better known *V. x bodnantense* 'Dawn', and just a few branches will fill your home with a sweet-smelling scent. To maintain strong and beautiful productive growth it's important to prune after flowering but do so very carefully; at most, remove just a few old branches. **AGM.**

Height 2.5m.

Origin Taken from a seedling raised at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, in 1933.

Conditions Moderately fertile, humus-rich soil; full sun to full shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

Season Winter to early spring. **FVZ**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER



JASON INGRAM

HELLEBORUS X HYBRIDUS 'QUEEN OF SPADES'

I always look forward to seeing hellebores. Recent breeding has ensured there is now a full spectrum of colour to provide the perfect late-winter pick-me-up. Dark-purple hellebores associate beautifully with pale-pink cultivars as well as with snowdrops and *Cyclamen coum* in borders and pots. Remove old leaves around Christmas and mulch with leafmould, and you'll be able to appreciate the flowers unhindered. These will be followed by fresh leaves and, if you're lucky, new seedlings later in the summer.

Height 30-45cm.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Rich, well-drained soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest February to April. **TB**

CORNUS SANGUINEA 'MIDWINTER FIRE'

The young stems of *Cornus* can make a dazzling winter display and tend to work best in large, repeating drifts of different colours. We use them along the main drive, to give a cheerful welcome in the darker months. Every spring they should be coppiced back to a low framework, to encourage young growth for the following year. This is an excellent cultivar with golden-orange stems and lovely, yellow, autumn colour that works beautifully with purple *Verbena bonariensis* poking its heads through the leaves.

Height 2m.

Origin Garden (species Europe, western Asia).

Conditions Almost any soil or location.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest November to March. **TC**



JASON INGRAM



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BERGENIA 'WINTERMÄRCHEN'

While working on the trials field at RHS Wisley, I was fortunate enough to witness its three-year *Bergenia* trial. This one shone above all others thanks to its rich, beetroot-coloured foliage, which is illuminated by the winter sun. The foliage has a delicacy and elegance that eludes many bergenias, and its nodding pink flowers (in April and May) add to its charm. For the best winter colour, grow in a sunny position, and ensure reasonably moist soil in summer. **AGM.**

Height 30-45cm.

Origin Garden (species Himalayas).

Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; sun for best winter colour.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Beetroot-coloured foliage in winter; flowers in April. **TB**

HAMAMELIS X *INTERMEDIA* 'ROBERT'

This hybrid group of witch hazels is a cross between the showier *H. japonica* (the Japanese species) and *H. mollis* (the fragrant Chinese witch hazel). 'Robert' is a scented cultivar that can flower as early as December. Its apricot petals have a subtlety that is even more rewarding when discovered in winter. Best placed near to a path so you can easily enjoy the subtle flowers. Once autumn colour has faded, remove some of the spent leaves to expose the precious flowers. **AGM.**

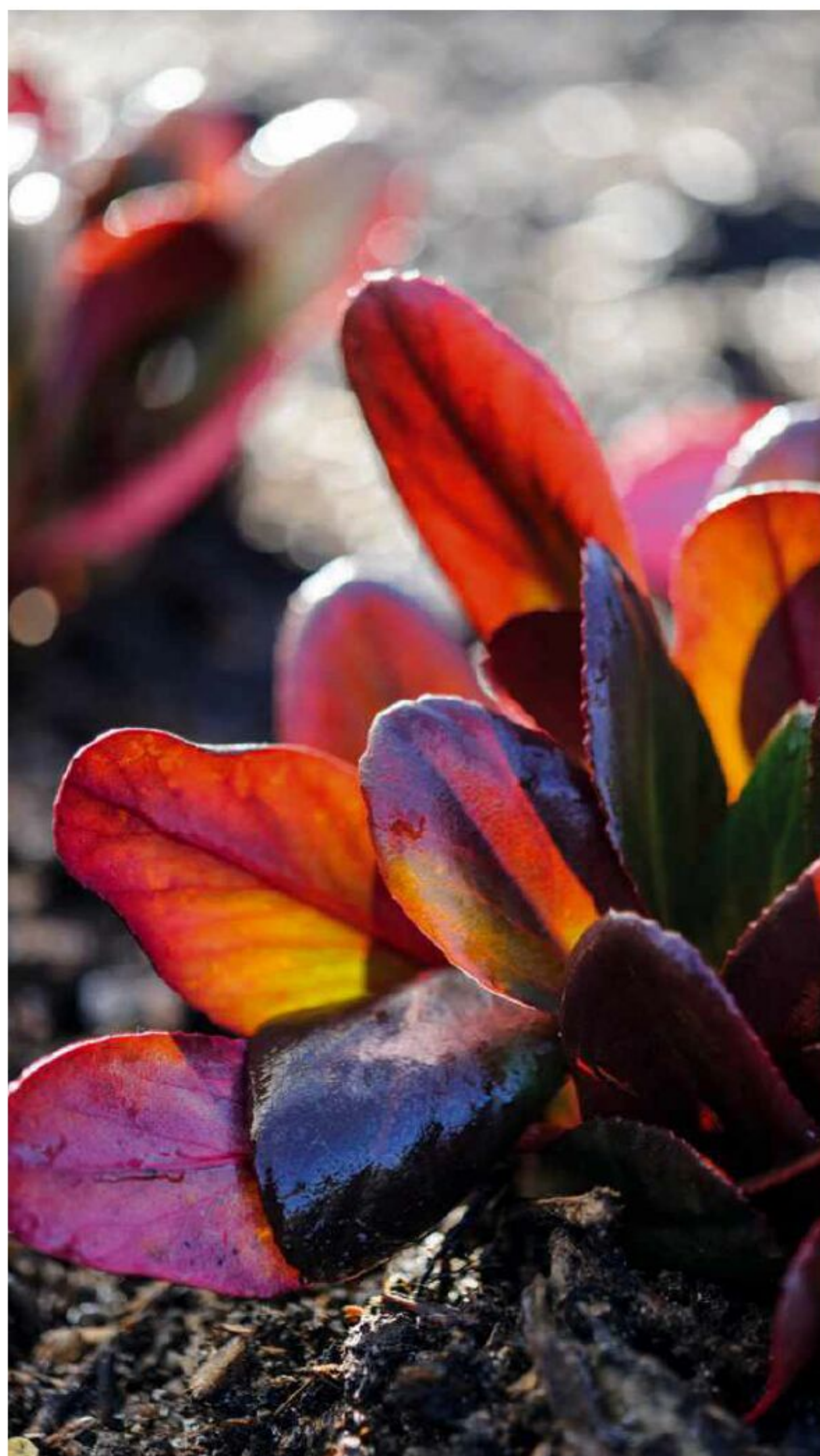
Height 2.5-4m.

Origin Garden hybrid.

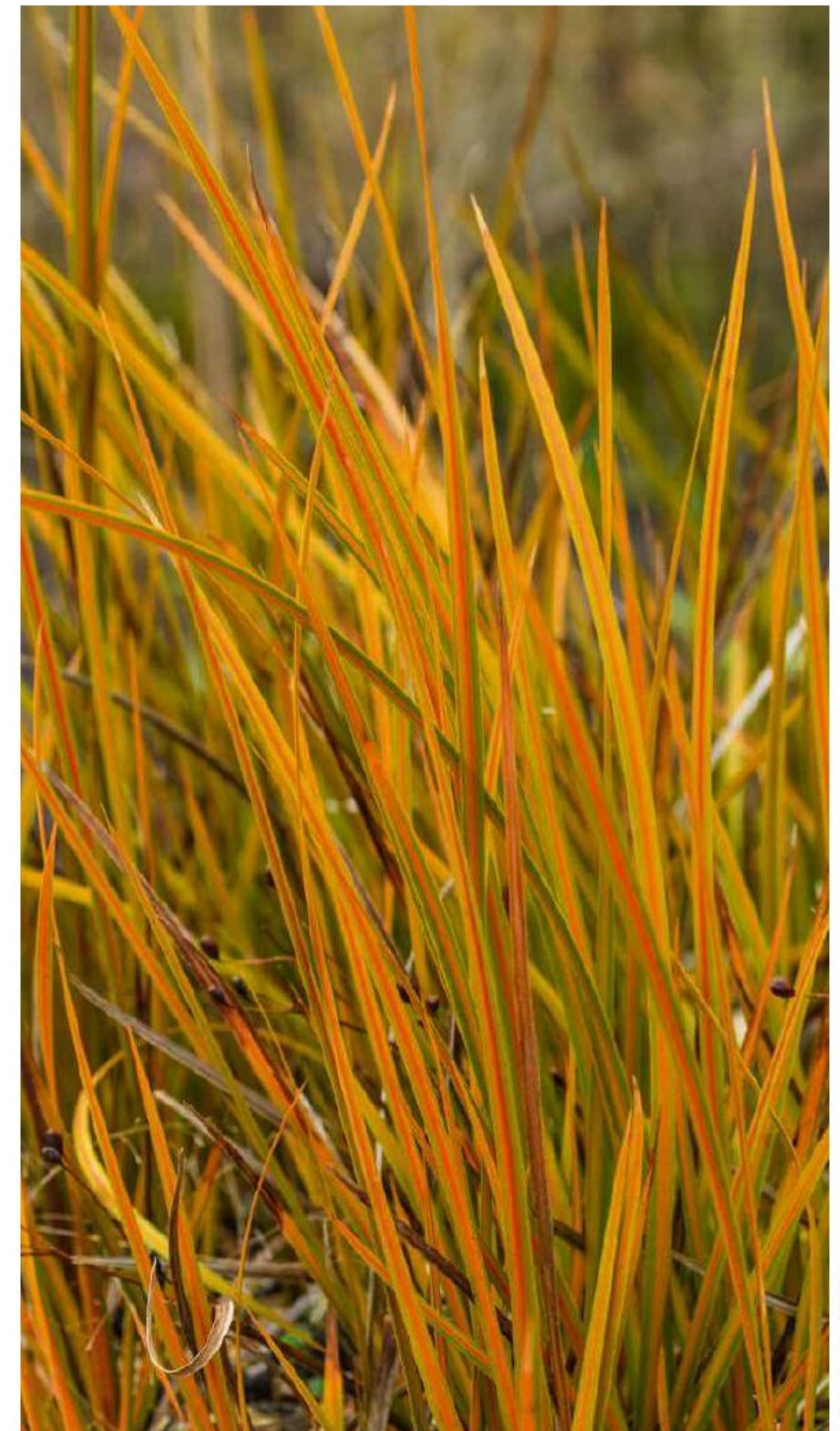
Conditions Moist but well-drained, fertile soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest December to February. **TB**



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LIBERTIA PEREGRINANS

This lovely little evergreen, known as *mikoikoi* or the New Zealand iris, is native to the South Island of the country. The species name *peregrinans* means travelling or wandering, and refers to its slow but steady running nature, making it easy to propagate by potting up divisions. It has small, pretty, white flowers in early summer but its best impact is in winter when its bright, striped, golden-orange foliage adds rich colour. Perfect at the front of a border and works specially well pushing its head up through carpets of thyme; a classic Beth Chatto combination.

Height 50cm.

Origin New Zealand.

Conditions Front of the border in well-draining soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

Season of interest Year-round for foliage with flowers June to July. **TC**

FEW PLANTS CAN RIVAL THIS BEAUTIFUL, SCENTED SHRUB IN FULL FEBRUARY FLOW

DAPHNE BHOLUA 'JACQUELINE POSTILL'



JASON INGRAM

DAPHNE BHOLUA 'JACQUELINE POSTILL'

Though it may be a subtle presence for much of the year, few plants can rival this daphne in full February flow. Planted in a sheltered position, ideally near your house, delicate pink flowers will appear and fill the air with sweet scent – perfect on a cold, winter's day. Some specimens retain their leaves better than others, but usually the flowering is uncompromised. Avoid excessive mulching or fertiliser around the base of this beautiful shrub. **AGM.**

Height 1.5-2.5m.

Origin Nepal to southern China.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; sheltered position.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest Late winter to early spring. **TB**

CYCLAMEN COUM

We all have those problematic spaces in our gardens where we struggle to establish plants or achieve a splash of colour. Hardy cyclamen can deliver plenty of the latter, plus exquisite foliage from autumn through spring in a number of our garden's tricky spots. I grow *Cyclamen coum* under conifers and find them self-seeding among the buttress roots of trees – places from which you'd assume most plants would shy away. Allow them a dry, dormant period during summer and look out for silver-leaved and patterned forms in nurseries at this time of year. **AGM.**

Height 10cm.

Origin Bulgaria to Turkey and Caucasus.

Conditions Free-draining soils; full sun or part shade, superb under trees.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest January to March. **TB**



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MAAYKE DE RIDDER

CARDAMINE *QUINQUEFOLIA*

We love the entire *Cardamine* genus, but *Cardamine quinquefolia*, which spreads quickly to fill a large area, is one of the most beautiful. In our garden it starts blooming in late February, the fresh-green colour of its leaves showing such enthusiasm that for us this has become a plant that epitomises spring. Its delicate flowers are more lilac than purple, and like other cardamines are held above beautiful leaves. It seems fragile, but it is perfectly hardy, and prefers moist soil in partial shade. And best of all it is a magnet for early butterflies.

Height 25cm.

Origin Southern Europe to Iran.

Conditions Moist soil; full to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 6a-7a.

Season Spring. **FVZ**

CROCUS 'LADYKILLER'

Some flowers you can enjoy en masse; others should be individually savoured. A case in point is this exquisitely detailed crocus with pure-white flowers that have a rich, dark-purple flash of colour on the underside. Each flower's vibrant orange stamens simply add to its intensity. I generally grow these bulbs in pots, topped with gravel, which brings the blooms off the ground so you can enjoy them up close. Plant them densely to ensure a full display and once they've flowered, allow them to go dormant or plant in your garden for future years.

Height 10cm.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Well-drained, gritty soil; sun.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Late winter to early spring. **TB**

DELICATE, FERN-LIKE LEAVES PROVIDE AN ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY TO THE BORDER

MAHONIA EURYBRACTEATA SUBSP. *GANPINENSIS* 'SOFT CARESS'

PRIMULA VULGARIS

One of our favourite plants for early spring is the pale-yellow *Primula vulgaris*. It flowers exuberantly, directly from the leaf axils on short, individual stems and will self-seed widely (the seeds are also scattered by ants). Combine it with *Primula elatior* and *Primula veris*, especially interesting cultivars such as 'Sunset Shades', and you will be rewarded with an overwhelming flood of yellow, sometimes with a reddish orange or green touch that sings of spring. The blue accent of *Scilla bifolia* in between makes the show complete. **AGM.**

Height 10cm.

Origin Western and southern Europe.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade to full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season Early spring. **FVZ**



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MAHONIA EURYBRACTEATA SUBSP. *GANPINENSIS* 'SOFT CARESS'

This compact mahonia is aptly named as its wonderful, thorn-free foliage is so inviting you simply have to brush your hand through it. From August to October it has arching racemes of lightly fragrant, bright-yellow flowers, followed by spherical, blue-black berries, but the delicate, almost fern-like leaves provide an architectural quality to the border throughout the year. It's a tough plant that will grow in shade or sun, and in 2013 it was named RHS Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year.

Height 1.5m.

Origin Garden (species China).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest Year round. **TC**

CHAENOMELES SPECIOSA 'NIVALIS'

A most versatile plant that can be trained against a wall or grown as a free-standing, cushion-like shrub. I particularly like the elegance of this cultivar's white flowers, which bloom in February. Spherical fruits appear in late summer and give additional interest. Tolerant of most garden conditions, including a problematic, north-facing wall. Prune after flowering by removing a proportion of the oldest stems, thereby rejuvenating the shrub over time.

Height 2-3m.

Origin Garden (species China).

Conditions Ideally a well-drained, fertile soil but tolerant of clay and drought; sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Flowers late winter to early spring, fruits summer to autumn. **TB**



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GALANTHUS ELWESII

A superb form of this winter favourite. I particularly enjoy growing this species, not only for the large, white flowers – which can often be twice the size of our much-loved common snowdrop – but also because of the opulent, glaucous foliage that accompanies them. *Galanthus elwesii* is suitable for growing in containers where a gritty, free-draining compost mix can be achieved. However, it is a plant that dislikes excessive winter moisture so good drainage is essential. **AGM.**

Height 15-30cm.

Origin Balkans, western Turkey.

Conditions Any reasonable, well-drained soil; sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-7b.

Season of interest Late winter to early spring. **TB**

SARCOCOCCA CONFUSA

A shrub whose popularity is well founded. With its dark-green, glossy foliage and overwhelming scent, *Sarcococca confusa* is hard to beat and even harder to pass by in a garden during February. Its highly scented, pure-white flowers stand out bright against the contrasting evergreen leaves. Plant near a doorway to make the most of the scent, a welcome treat at a time of year when you're less likely to venture too far from the house. *Sarcococca* works well in most garden situations, and can even be grown in a pot and clipped to shape. **AGM.**

Height 1.5-2.5m.

Origin China.

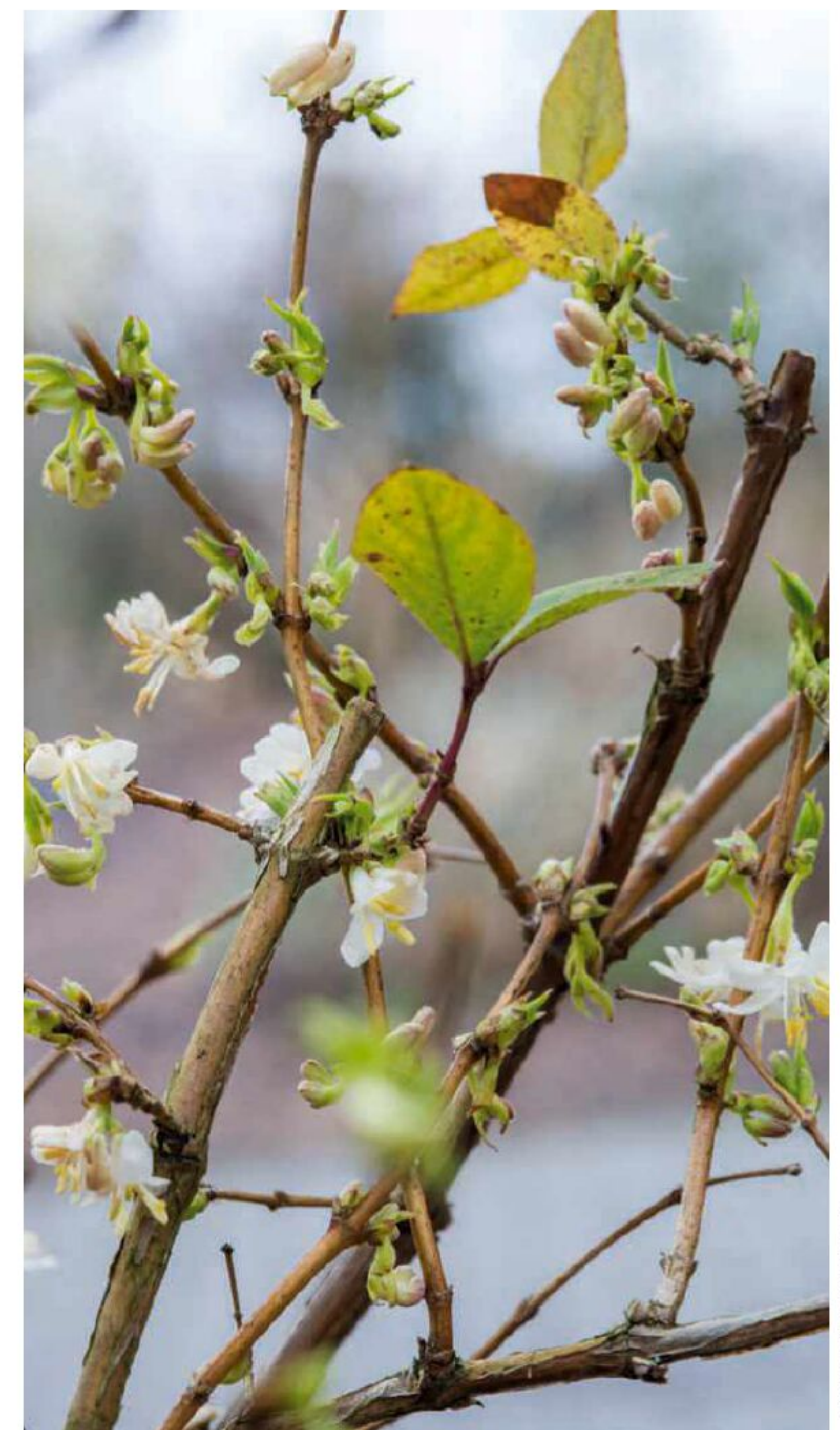
Conditions Moist, fertile, well-drained soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

Season of interest February. **TB**



JASON INGRAM



MAAYEK DERIDDER

LONICERA X PURPUSII 'WINTER BEAUTY'

Winter can be hard for those of us who love to bring flowers into the house. Thank goodness then for *Lonicera x purpusii* 'Winter Beauty', whose creamy-white flowers are so highly fragrant that a single branch can transform your house. In temperate climates this shrubby honeysuckle is semi-evergreen with beautiful, dark-green leaves, and produces dark-red berries in summer. The rough-textured, grey bark on old stems makes it even more appealing. **AGM.**

Height 2m.

Origin Cross between *L. fragrantissima* and *L. standishii* (1920).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

Season Winter to early spring. **FVZ**

ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN HELLEBORES WITH NODDING, GREEN, PURPLE-EDGED FLOWERS

HELEBORUS FOETIDUS



MAAYKE DERIDDER

HELEBORUS FOETIDUS

One of the best-known hellebores with clusters of nodding, green, purple-edged flowers. It's what in the Netherlands we call a *stinzenplanten* – plants that were introduced so long ago we tend to think of them as natives – and when grown among other *stinzenplanten* adds height and stature. From our window we can see this *Helleborus foetidus* all year long and we never tire of it. We also love *Helleborus foetidus* Wester Flisk Group with red stems and flowers edged with dark red, and *Helleborus foetidus* 'Sopron' with silvery leaves. **AGM.**

Height 60cm.

Origin Western and southern Europe.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

Season Early spring. **FVZ**

CARPINUS BETULUS

Unlike beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), which can prove difficult on wet clay soils, hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) is tolerant of most soils, and also resistant to sea winds. Unlike beech, which holds on to its leaves throughout winter, hornbeam leaves fall in autumn to create a most beautiful filigree branch silhouette for a winter hedge. It will form precisely the type of silhouette you want in winter, especially if it's given a good prune in late summer. And you don't have to worry about clearing up leaves in spring, as by then the leaves have already gone.

Height 10m.

Origin Europe, Turkey, Iran.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun, part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Year round. **FVZ**



JASON INGRAM

PHYLLOSTACHYS BAMBUOIDES 'HOLOCHRYSA'

This bamboo has wonderful, deep yellow-orange canes all year, but it's in winter when its colour seems especially welcome. This is not a plant for the smallest gardens as it is capable of growing up to 9-10m, and when settled and happy, especially in warm and sheltered spots (less so in cooler gardens), will begin to spread significantly at the root. At this point the new canes start becoming larger in girth, achieving diameters of more than 5cm. I annually remove smaller canes to encourage this process. **AGM.**

Height 4.5-10m.

Origin Garden (species China).

Conditions Humus-rich, moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.

Season of interest Year round. **KW**



MAAYKE DE RIDDER

This was Sylvia's promise to you...



A generation ago, a woman named Sylvia made a promise. As a doctor's secretary, she'd watched stroke destroy the lives of so many people. She was determined to make sure we could all live in a world where we're far less likely to lose our lives to stroke.

She kept her promise, and a gift to the Stroke Association was included in her Will. Sylvia's gift helped fund the work that made sure many more of us survive stroke now than did in her lifetime.

Sylvia changed the story for us all. Now it's our turn to change the story for those who'll come after us.

Stroke still shatters lives and tears families apart. And for so many survivors the road to recovery is still long and desperately lonely. If you or someone you love has been affected by stroke – you'll know just what that means.

But it doesn't have to be like this. You can change the story, just like Sylvia did, with a gift in your Will. All it takes is a promise.

You can promise future generations a world where researchers discover new treatments and surgeries and every single stroke survivor has the best care, rehabilitation and support network possible, to help them rebuild their lives.

Will you make that promise to generations to come? Please, leave a gift in your Will to the Stroke Association.

Find out how by calling **020 7566 1505**
or email **legacy@stroke.org.uk**
or visit **stroke.org.uk/legacy**

Rebuilding lives after stroke

The Stroke Association is registered as a charity in England and Wales (No 211015) and in Scotland (SC037789).
Also registered in the Isle of Man (No. 945) and Jersey (NPO 369), and operating as a charity in Northern Ireland.

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